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The Week

PRESIDENT COOLIDGE'S inaugural address added nothing to the public knowledge of the man and of his official program. He informed the world that he was going to meet all his obligations to humanity, but he was going to do it by being "openly and candidly, intensely and scrupulously American." He would conduct the government in the interest of all the people, but the means which he proposed for the promotion of the popular welfare is that of safeguarding the rights and advancing the interests of a small propertied class. The idea which Theodore Roosevelt introduced into national politics and which Woodrow Wilson carried on in a different form—the idea that the American nation will find its fulfillment not by conscious loyalty to the past but by conscious preparation to realize old ideals under new conditions—has no abiding place in Mr. Coolidge's mind. He interprets, and properly interprets, the recent Republican victory as a blanket endorsement of our existing government, of our existing business methods, and as an overwhelming condemnation of any moral or technical preparation for their future modification. One searches in vain in his speech for an intimation of the spirit which sometimes appears in the speeches and in the acts of the British Conservative Premier—the spirit which proclaims that a government devoted to conservation should be ready and willing in the interest of its own cherished objects to propose on occasion drastic reforms. But while there is nothing liberal about Mr. Coolidge's conservatism, neither is it disposed towards cheap and violent demonstrations of its sense of superiority. He is sincere, dignified, consistent, self-contained, not ungenerous and personally disinterested.

IN spite of the consistency of the President's opinions there is an extremely significant discrepancy between the ways in which his temperament and his culture express themselves. His most salient characteristic as a man is a thorough-going individual unpretentiousness. Both Roosevelt and Wilson were intensely personal men. They cherished resentments and allowed the barricades which they had erected on the streets of their life to interfere with their transaction of public business. But Mr. Coolidge is impersonal without being undistinguished. He is quiet, discreet and keeps his eye fastened on his work. He draws at times upon a fund of dry, shrewd humor which apparently indicates a native willingness to see through the shams and pretences of social intercourse. He takes his job more seriously than he takes himself, which is a rare and most desirable trait in an American politician. In all these respects there is a refreshing absence of bunk about his personality.

MIXED up, however, with the realism and the unpretentiousness of his personal behavior, there is a sentimental, romantic pretentiousness in the expression of his convictions which is truly appalling. It is incredible that a discreet, composed and humorous man can be as complacent about anything in the America of today as Calvin Coolidge is about everything. "Here stands our country, an example of tranquillity at home, a patron of tranquillity abroad. Here stands its government, aware of its might but obedient to its conscience. Here it will continue to stand, seeking peace and prosperity, solicitous for the welfare of the wage-earner . . . attentive to the intuitive counsel of womanhood, encouraging education, desiring the advancement of religion. . . . America seeks no earthly empire. . . .

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The legions she sends forth are armed not with the sword but with the cross. . . . She cherishes no purpose save to merit the favor of Almighty God." The significance of this passage is that it was uttered not by a sanguine and flamboyant orator, "inebriated by the exuberance of his own (patriotic) verbosity" but by a sallow, thin-lipped, reticent, calculating, realistic little man who thinks he means what he says. His hair, it is true, is red, but the redness of his hair is tame compared to that of his patriotic religion whose flushed and vivid hue is comparable only to the color of the hair of the wild women of Borneo.

THE contrast between Mr. Coolidge's discreet personality and the ominous verbal moral exuberance of his patriotism is, of course, characteristic of many Americans. In this as in other respects he is typical of many a small-town lawyer who may be much of an individual in his private relationships but who as a public character cultivates an absolute and articulate regularity. He is, however, more representative of the small-town lawyer of thirty years ago than of his prototype of today. The type has always possessed some of the scepticism of the man from Missouri, but of late years the former scepticism has developed into a cynicism which would forbid its purveyor, except with conscious hypocrisy, from indulging in patriotic effervescence. Of course there is nothing hypocritical about Mr. Coolidge's faith. It is of the essence of his popularity and success that he brings a familiar and in some respects an admirable small-town personality plus the utmost sincerity of conviction to the support of an economic and political system which is so unable and unwilling to realize its own pretensions that it arouses fears, scruples, moral callousness and cynical impotence even among its beneficiaries.

THE President's views of economics and public finance are remarkably simple. "The rewards of industry belong to those who earn them. The only constitutional tax is the tax which ministers to public necessity. The property of the country belongs to the people of the country. Their title is absolute. . . . The collection of any taxes which are not absolutely required, which do not beyond reasonable doubt contribute to the public welfare, is only a species of legalized larceny." "Absolute title," "absolutely required"—these words sound absolutely clear. But alas for clear simplicity when it is sent naked and unarmed against the bristling complexity of real life. Is it absolutely required that we maintain the Mayflower and presidential week-end parties at the expense of the taxpayer? Is it absolutely required that we pay $10,000 a year to Congressmen instead of $7,500? Or are these expenditures, and thousands like them, merely instances in which there is a relatively stronger reason for the public spending of money than for the remission of taxes? As far as the "absolute title" to property goes, is there any property in America—except tax-exempt bonds—which is not held subject to the power of taxation, and has not the Supreme Court itself declared that "the power to tax is the power to destroy"? "Legalized larceny" is not too strong a term for taxation which produces no better result than governmental waste. But who is robbed: the taxpayer, or the legitimate services that are starved? And how shall we describe the private waste of funds which the government needs for genuine public services but fails to collect by taxation? The national income has to maintain all our expenditures, public and private. Which branch of expenditure should have priority at a given time cannot be determined absolutistically, but depends on relative urgencies.

THE headliner in Mr. Franklin Roosevelt's program for reforming and reinvigorating the Democratic party sounds drearily familiar. He proposes that the party shall regenerate itself by renewed loyalty to its fundamental Jeffersonian principles. But when did the Democracy relax its allegiance to those principles? Woodrow Wilson, its last great leader, was not only a loyal Jeffersonian but again and again he piously proclaimed the allegiance in his public addresses. Mr. John Davis, its last presidential candidate, was, according to his own announcements and according to the interpretation of his supporters, one of the most flawless exponents and incarnations of Jeffersonian principles in the long—and in this respect fertile—record of the Democracy. The weakness of the party does not consist in its disloyalty to the creed of Thomas Jefferson, but in the fact that the interests and lives of the leading members of the party are not only wholly different from those of other members but from the interests and outlook of the people whom Jefferson and Jackson represented. What the Democracy needs is consistency of economic and social outlook among people who call themselves Democrats. Their reiterated attempts to make a formal allegiance to ambiguous and partly obsolete principles take the place of the search for genuine unity of behavioristic impulse is a habit which will bring about the ruin of the Democratic party rather than its regeneration.

ACCORDING to the best available information at the time when these lines are being written, the British government will, at the March meeting of the Council of the League, firmly announce its rejection of the Protocol. It will sympathize with the object which the Protocol is intended to accomplish, but it is afraid of the machinery of economic and military sanctions whereby it is proposed to do away with aggressive war. Its refusal will doubtless be fatal to the existing document, but the idea of outlawing aggressive war, of defining the aggressive belligerent as the nation which refuses to arbitrate a dispute, and of placing behind the condemnation some form of compulsion will surely survive. The

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Protocol, rejected though it be as a specific plan, has served two useful purposes. It has indicated the direction in which the world will ultimately seek the organization of peace. It has concentrated the attention of European statesmen on the problem of security for European continental states. It will, we believe, be advantageous to have security carefully canvassed as a European problem before there is a further attempt to deal with it as a world problem.

IT is the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles which render it so terribly difficult to create a sound legal foundation for security in Europe. That Treaty and its corollaries deprived the vanquished nations of security. By disarming Germany without establishing any system which protected the German people against the consequences of disarmament, it wrote insecurity, distrust, apprehension and the threat of one-sided violence into the public law of Europe. Germany is helpless not only as against France, but as against Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, and the real problem is: How can security, independence and a genuine international status be provided for Germany and the other vanquished powers without violence? Of course the problem is not usually presented in this form. It is the security of France, armed to the teeth, rather than that of impotent Germany, which is now being ostensibly discussed in Paris and London. But France is insecure and the French feel the threat of insecurity chiefly because they realize that if they had been treated as their government has treated the Germans, they would consider a war of national self-defense entirely justifiable. If the French government continues to treat Germany in this way, no compact with Great Britain and no alliances with the smaller states of Central Europe can bring security to France. A France which lives by the sword and uses its irresistible power to prevent her nearest neighbor from living in self-respect will perish by the sword.

THE "Agwi" tax remission case, exposed by Senator Couzen's committee, will appear shocking to those Americans who suppose that under Secretary Mellon the federal tax laws are administered equally for rich and poor. A great shipping corporation got $7,400,000 knocked off its tax bill by means of a hard luck story which Secretary Mellon appears not to have verified thoroughly and which would not have been strictly relevant to the case, if it had been true. The corporation openly juggled its capital and income, to get off as easily as possible, and seems to have lost no prestige with the Treasury thereby. We are not, however, ready to assume that Secretary Mellon intended to show special favor to this corporation. A similar leniency was shown, we surmise, in hundreds of other cases. Such leniency may be explained, if not justified, by the peculiar attendant circumstances. During the period in question—1917-1920—we were levying enormously heavy taxes with wholly inadequate experience to guide us in the assessment and collection. A great many corporations neglected to pay, and the Treasury, being unsure of its ground, was willing in many instances to remit a good part of the taxes on condition that the rest was paid without demur. The small man who paid what was demanded of him would open his eyes if he could know how the big man managed evasion.

IT is seldom that a Court invites a union to strike, especially upon a public utility, but that seems to be about the upshot of the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the cases of the shopmen's and clerks' unions against the Pennsylvania Railroad. Congress when it passed the Transportation Act saw the necessity for railroad managements to deal with unions in order to provide justice in settling disputes and so to avoid strikes. It therefore wrote in provisions governing adjustments, stating that managements and organizations "shall confer." When the Pennsylvania refused to confer, setting up to evade the law dummy organizations of its own, it was brought to book by the Labor Board, which interpreted the intention of Congress in this case. Decisions of the Labor Board are, under the law, not binding, and this one was disregarded by the railroad. But the employes hoped to enforce justice legally and peacefully by asking for an injunction under the apparently mandatory phrase of the law that uses the words "shall confer." The Supreme Court has decided in substance, however, that when Congress said "shall" it merely meant "ought to," since it provided no penalty for disobedience.

A POLICY of genuine conference has been recognized as desirable by Congress, by the Labor Board and by the Supreme Court in obiter dicta. Its public desirability rests largely on the need for avoiding interruptions of transportation. Since it is not enforced by a publicly established penalty, the obvious inference is that the only way to enforce it is by action of the unions aggrieved, through the penalty of the strike. The policy of conference having failed, the purpose of avoiding interruptions of transportation is by the same token endangered. The public and the agencies of its police power should now clearly recognize that any labor trouble arising on the railroads over the question of conference with unions is attributable to the recalcitrance of the managements which refuse to confer, and that in such trouble the weight of public sympathy ought to be with the unions. We do not expect immediate revolt on the part of the Pennsylvania employes, any more than we expect immediate revolution on the part of all populations subject to autocratic constitutions enforced from above. The establishment of representative government by revolt is a slow, clumsy and costly process, whether in politics or in industry. We regret that in the United States, espe-

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cially on the railroads, its necessity has not been wholly obviated by intelligent legislation or intelligent policy. But until more enlightened legislation, such as was embodied in the Howell-Barkley bill, is passed, the public must be prepared to suffer either the acute crisis of industrial uprisings, or the festering inefficiency of suppressed discontent, incident to the process of the struggle against industrial autocracy embodied in such managements as that of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

FRANK MOORE COLBY, who died on March 3rd at St. Luke's Hospital, not long after his sixtieth birthday, will be missed by all lovers of American satire at its wittiest. Such an interest in the past, whether as history, politics, letters or human nature, has never been united with his ability to make other men share his deep laughter at our exaggerated estimates of the present and the future. Nothing comparable to Colby's prose for energy, neatness and gaiety has been written in this country.

UNEASY lies the head that wears a crown. Until comparatively recently we had supposed Dr. Lowell to be the most securely established university president in the country. By birth, breeding, temperament, and quality of mind he has seemed to be almost the beau idéal of trustees and overseers. Entering the administration with the avowed intent of stiffening a curriculum grown lax under the free elective system, he nevertheless enjoyed the unearned increment of the Haughton tradition of winning football. During and after the War, that period of highest mortality of college presidents, he was truculent without being hysterical. He backed Muensterberg, Laski, and Chaffee against bitter criticism, yet the weight of his appointments has been conservative. But he has somehow failed to arouse universal enthusiasm. The New York Evening Post is given neither to muck-raking nor to anti-Harvard sentiment. Its announcement of a series of articles, attempting to cast up the debits and credits of the Lowell administration, can be taken as prima facie evidence that a state of war exists.

UNFORTUNATELY the attacks which President Lowell has sustained recently have been due not so much to his central administrative policies as to various accidents and incidental errors. The first serious mistake was probably his raising the issue of the admission of Jews and Negroes to his beloved freshman dormitories and therefore to the university. This antagonized what a politician would call "the hyphenate and radical vote." Subsequently Percy Haughton was lured to Columbia, with various changes in the management of Harvard athletics which seem to be less efficacious in producing winning teams. It is said that Harvard has won only in chess this season. That has rapidly alienated the sporting vote. A year ago President Lowell seemed to have allowed Dean Donham of the School of Business Administration to run away with the university. That, together with the irritation many felt over the loss of Professor Baker, antagonized the cultured vote. The result is a state of general belligerency among the alumni.

"IT has been called to our attention," says a circular addressed to librarians by the American Defense Society, "that requests for radical books are received by many of the libraries and in response to these requests the radical books are obtained and placed on the shelves. They surely ought to be offset on the basis of presenting both sides of the subject." As a comment upon the books which the Society recommends this is very interesting. The list, compiled by Madison Grant, is headed "A List of Authoritative Books." Of the thirty-eight titles perhaps half a dozen are really authoritative works, scholarly in tone and contents. The others are precisely what we should expect of the author of that famous text-book of the Nordic Faith, The Passing of the Great Race, pseudo-science and frothy propaganda. The scholarship of the compilation is sufficiently indicated by the fact that Dr. Clark Wissler's illuminating study, Man and Culture, is presented here as Mind and Culture. The American Defense Society is quite right about the use that should be made of the greater number of these books. They should be set apart on a special shelf marked "Propaganda: Nordic. For antidote, see Propaganda: Radical."

Revolution via Militarism

MILITARIST agitation, damped down by the universal apathy in the last years is beginning to blaze freely once more. We are gravely informed that the country is in danger and that we must set to work forthwith to build more cruisers, submarines, airplanes, anti-air-craft guns, poison gas laboratories. One admiral threatens us with war on the Pacific because we are bound to compete with Japan for the trade of China. Another threatens us with war on the Atlantic because England and the British colonies have in contemplation retaliatory fiscal measures if we adopt the absurd and injurious policy of discriminatory duties against goods brought in under foreign flags. Little militarists go about the country attacking the peace organizations, impugning the loyalty of every worker for international understanding, minimizing the horrors of modern warfare and even singing the ridiculous old praises of war as a school of manly virtue.

We are a patient people; we smile indulgently and go about our daily affairs, confident that no volume of silly talk will greatly matter. But it is worth considering whether we are not too complacent about it. Let us recall—what most of us would like to forget—the biggest exploit of the militarists of our time, the World War. It is still debated what particular group of militarists was most responsible

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for the War. The Allied official report is that the German militarists, supported—perhaps led—by those of Hungary and Austria deserve the whole blame. The German official doctrine is that the militarists of Russia and France, ably supported by British naval militarism, deliberately planned the War. For our present purpose there is no need of deciding between these competing doctrines. It is enough for us that they agree completely in bringing the responsibility home to militarism.

There was a time, to be sure, when our minds were befogged by war propaganda and we were led to believe that there were specific differences in the quality of militarism. There was supposed to be something characteristically offensive and provocative in the militarism of the enemy while our own was supposed to be conciliatory and defensive. Scarcely anyone remains under this delusion now. All the militarists of every country proclaim the same doctrines, defend the same positions. They may be more numerous and influential in one community than in another. Every country has as many as it is willing to maintain. Few or many, they run true to type.

All of them, everywhere, arrogate to themselves a purer, more brightly flaming patriotism than they are willing to attribute to anyone else.

All of them, everywhere, pretend to an enormous solicitude over the preservation of existing institutions, political, social, economic.

All of them, everywhere, are profoundly convinced that every foreign state is a potential enemy, that no foreign state can realize its historic mission without winning in a violent conflict with its neighbors.

All of them, everywhere, assume that their own national policy is essentially defensive, and that the only effective defense lies in the offensive. Our neighbors are preparing to strike; let us strike first. Such is their conception of prudent conduct.

All of them, everywhere, agitate for unlimited "preparedness." Other states are "preparing"; let us prepare in twofold measure. Our preparations stimulate those of other states; let us lay on, and see who first cries enough.

We are not bringing a moral case against the militarists. They mean well. Subjectively they are no doubt what they profess themselves to be: conservative patriots. But we wish to emphasize the commonplace fact that professions and intentions are of less general importance than results. And we have in the state of Europe a colossal example of the results achieved by those patriotic conservatives, the militarists.

We are concerned here with the effect of the War on civil institutions. Accordingly the first item we may properly credit to the militarists is Soviet Russia. There was, to be sure, an endemic communism in Russia before the militarists got in their work of racking the political structure to pieces. There is an endemic communism in every modern state, and has been for a hundred years, just as in every city there is endemic pneumonia, waiting for the proper conditions to spread into an epidemic. Everyone at all familiar with Russian affairs knew before 1914 that a prolonged and desperate war would end in a revolution. Nobody knew what the revolution would end in, but now everybody knows: Bolshevik dictatorship. The militarists might properly make a parade of so stupendous an achievement, instead of trying to foist off the credit on Lenin and Trotzky.

The second item we may credit to the militarists is the ruin of the conservative middle class throughout central Europe. That class, like the conservative middle class in our own country, had invested heavily in gilt edged "securities"—government and corporation bonds, real estate mortgages, insurance policies. All these values have been destroyed. The children of the middle class have in large part been merged in the proletariat and in another large part have gone under completely. President Coolidge fears the confiscatory effect of our federal inheritance tax law, which takes annually one thirty-fifth of one percent of the property values of the country. Two-thirds of the property values of Germany were burned up on the altars of militarism.

The destruction of the conservative middle class was of course even more thorough in Austria. But in the victorious countries also the middle class received a crushing blow. The thrifty Frenchman who had built up a competence in Russian bonds was left with worthless paper on his hands. The Frenchman who combined patriotism with thrift and invested in his own nation's bonds gets a franc worth five cents in place of the franc worth twenty. The Italian investor in national bonds fares somewhat worse. The British middle class has not been exposed to the vicissitudes of a wildly fluctuating currency, but the stamina is being sucked out of it by war taxation. We Americans came off most comfortably of all. Except for the little bill due the government March 15—every March 15 till we die —we have few outstanding reminders of what the militarists achieved.

It is not our object here to mourn the property losses of the War, though the three hundred billions and more wasted would have sufficed to lift from the occidental world the curse of poverty, if it could have been applied to such a constructive end. We are interested here in the political consequences of future wars, if we must have wars. The conservative state as we know it rests ultimately not on constitutions, written or unwritten, but on the substantial foundation of a middle class. Not Congress nor President nor Supreme Court, but Main Street is the bulwark of our Constitution. If all the Main Streets in America went down in ruin we should not be electing men like Coolidge to the Presidency nor seating men like Stone on the Supreme Court Bench. Our existing political institutions would survive for a time by inertia, but they would never be secure until we had managed to rehabilitate Main Street.

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Europe may be able to reëstablish her conservative social institutions after an interval of dictatorships, but only on condition that she can rebuild a solid middle class. That she can do only if she can keep her militarists in check and live in peace and security.

In most of the occidental world there was cohesive power enough in the old society to withstand the shock of the last war, though with great difficulty. War is now on a new footing of technique, immeasurably more destructive and costly than in 1914. Where the last war just failed of complete subversion of civil institutions, the next will succeed at the first blast. Where civil institutions were hardly shaken in the last war, the next will put their tenacity to the ultimate test. One more war may still fall short of producing a world revolution, but the succession of them contemplated by the militarists could not fail to produce exactly this result.

We can understand why those who desire a world revolution should look with a friendly eye upon the militarists, big and little, who parade the country proclaiming the good news of the next war. Revolutionists who are not blind must by this time have come to realize that agitation, education, propaganda can make no headway overturning so solid an institution as the middle class state. The middle class must first be destroyed, and war alone can destroy it. If revolutionists were really rational, and had subsidies "from Moscow" to dispose of, they would spend every cent in subsidizing the bellicose captains who proclaim the inevitable war and the admirals who would pick quarrels with Japan and England in the alleged interest of trade.

What we cannot understand is the attitude of the conservative middle class itself, and of those who, while not content with the existing order as it stands, wish to make progress through peaceful evolution, not revolution. How does it come that these classes accept, as a rule, the conservative-patriotic pretensions of the militarists, the indefatigable pioneers of national ruin and world revolution?

In an armed world a measure of preparedness is necessary. But it ought to be obvious to those who believe in orderly civil evolution that the measure of preparedness should not be determined by those who think war inevitable and welcome it, but by those who are determined to find a way out from an international situation that tolerates war. Else preparedness and the agitation that goes with it are bound to be provocative. They are bound to create international strains whose accumulation in the end brings war, economic ruin and civil revolution. The conservative classes have exerted themselves strenuously to put down the men who seek to bring on revolution by argument. They take to their bosom the men who seek to bring on war, of which the inevitable consequence is revolution.

Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad. Is it then decreed by the gods that the middle class shall be destroyed? Their coquetting with their arch enemy, militarism, is a sinister omen.

Too Much Prosperity?

A DISTINGUISHED English visitor of conservative leanings is reported upon his return home to have said that the United States is at present the most hidebound country on the globe. We may entertain a hope that things are not so bad as they seem; we may with some effort persuade ourselves that a series of accidents rather than any underlying conviction of creed has brought reactionary elements to the top, and that we cannot judge from the top what is going on underneath.

A case might be made out for the statement that the scene in science, letters and the arts is one of exploration and movement, and that politics and theology are just the things which are most likely to mislead judgment. But it is dangerous to seek for comfort in excuses and palliatives. It is better to admit the element of truth in the worst that can be said, and endeavor to find the causes. They are doubtless too deep-seated, and too scattered to yield to any single diagnosis. But we offer the following suggestion in the hope that others may be moved to take up the discussion and carry the analysis further. Intelligent conservatives may enjoy the fruits of the present régime, but it is hardly probable that they are content with its intellectual causes. So we hope that they also will contribute to the explanation.

We open then with the tentative suggestion that we are suffering from an overdose of material prosperity. In view of the hardness of life for many, such a statement may seem to show hard-heartedness or ignorance or both. But we are speaking of the classes who are articulate and who fix the standards, although not the conditions, for all.

Never before in recorded history has there been so much money to spend and so many things to spend it for. Instead of the predicted swallowing of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat, the United States show an ever-increasing growth of a middle class, together with conditions that put within its reach products and enjoyments which in the past have been reserved for an aristocracy. Why should its members think, when without thinking they have so many things to spend their time and energy upon? To those who are on the upward economic grade, the world in which they live perhaps seems so nearly the best of all possible worlds as to turn their minds away from any idea of tampering with it.

Never before in history has prosperity been so unctuous and self-conscious as it is now with us. It is nearly our religion, and there are signs that the philanthropy which once sprang from genuine democratic sympathy is becoming merged in a gospel of spreading material ease and comfort. In most countries in the past except when the well-to-do had almost despotic political power, evidences of wealth have been concealed to some extent. Now they are

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exhibited as evidence of virtue accompanied by the exhortation: Go thou and do likewise. To criticize a state of affairs which has such beneficial results arouses almost the same emotional reaction that treason excites under other circumstances. That hundreds of thousands of citizens should have become convinced that an old-fashioned American (in the favorable sense of the phrase) like Mr. La Follette was a dangerous Red can hardly be accounted for on any other theory than that he ventured to question the soundness of our prosperity. President Coolidge's identification of our prosperity with devout faith in God must have formulated the belief of millions.

There have been, we fancy, periods in which sentiments that now arouse a pious glow in church-going people would have seemed near to blasphemy. The Puritan doubtless believed in thrift, but his thrift was an accomplishment of hardship and sacrifice. The Coolidge gospel of thrift makes an appeal because the curtailment of public extravagance will leave more funds for private extravagance. We appreciate the impossibility of the clergy attempting a sincere crusade in the modern world against the Mammon of riches. But the tendency of the churches to surrender without a struggle to standards which identify prosperity with the rewards of the righteous raises, to our mind, a deeper issue than that between fundamentalist and modernist. One can imagine mediæval churchmen clubbing men over the heads, especially if they were Jews or showed heretical tendencies, in order to get means to build a cathedral. Only today and only, it is to be feared, in this country could a great church adopt all the methods and machinery of a business "drive," and secure funds by use of the "organization" and by appeal to the motive forces which are used to secure more factories and erect a better theatre building in Zenith City.

Perhaps an eager and alert intellectual life has always been more of a compensation for economic and material hardships than we realize. The benefits of suffering and the desirability of severe chastening have been overdone at times in the past. But there is, we believe, sound psychology in the popular identification of discipline with the undergoing of a certain amount of hardship. We certainly cannot have a plethora of prosperity without getting fat wits as well as fat bodies. In public matters we appear to be suffering from at least incipient fatty degeneration of the intellect. Irrespective of the merits of the particular recommendations in the inaugural message of President Coolidge, and independently of political issues, its tone and temper must strike an impartial mind as both unctuous and ill-bred, to say nothing of the mediocrity which we have learned to take for granted in state documents. The significant thing is not that such statements issue from the mouth of a politician; that perhaps only shows that he knows his business. The significant thing is the deterioration of intellectual standards which prevents so many persons from perceiving the level of intelligence upon which the document proceeds and which leads to the dismissal of any adverse criticism as mere partisan carping.

There are of course difficulties with the theory that the root of our reactionaryism is our inflated prosperity. But the hypothesis agrees with many obvious facts. Why otherwise should our reactionary condition be so complacent? Why should it not be harder, better disciplined, more courageously assertive? Why otherwise should the wealthy class, with so much power in its hands, be so timid, and so ready to submit to virtual blackmail by everyone who offers to fight off and keep down the Red menace? Why otherwise should the defeat of the Child Labor Amendment be hailed by a university president not just as a triumph for a certain theory of legislation and administration, which whether right or wrong is at least an intelligent theory, but as a triumph for youth? On what other basis, that is to say, can the density as well as the complacency of our present reactionary mind be explained?

A Policy of Stable Finance

IN this week's New Republic Mr. Keynes points out the danger, lurking in the American financial system for the past four years, that the huge stocks of gold in this country may at any time give rise to unhealthy expansion of credit and currency, with an inflationary rise of prices. He asks whether the Federal Reserve authorities will, as they ought, increase the rediscount interest rate in order to check the current boom tendency. Even before his article could be printed the answer was in part presented by an advance of the rediscount rate of the New York Federal Reserve Bank from 3 to 3½ percent. He may rest assured that our central banking authorities are embarked on the project of employing their control of credit as well as they can to aid in the stabilization of industry.

The theoretical argument as to the relative advantages of a gold standard and a "managed currency" is raging now in England, as it has intermittently in the United States for some years. To the innocent bystander who knows nothing of the cyclical processes of finance, but does fear higher prices of shoes or a loss of his job, this argument no doubt seems both incomprehensible and unimportant. Even business men and financial writers appear to grasp its essentials with difficulty. Yet it is really not so abstruse as it seems, and its possible effect on all of us is great. For the first time in history the United States is trying—cautiously, to be sure—an experiment in national control of credit, and it is well to know what is happening.

When Germany during and after the War issued soaring amounts of paper currency, and her bank loans increased proportionately, we saw all the phenomena of inflation in their most extreme form.

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Similar things have happened in lesser degree at some time during the past decade to every country in the world. The details are complex, but the main facts are obvious. Currency and credit represent purchasing power; they are used to exchange for everything else that is for sale. When they increase in volume more rapidly than the goods and services for which they are exchanged, their value falls—in other words, prices rise. Rapidly rising prices encourage speculation, profiteering, maladjustments of every kind. And there follows a day of reckoning and depression.

Conservatives have argued that such dangers may be avoided simply by adherence to the gold standard. The gold standard means ordinarily that anyone who wants to exchange his paper money for gold at the bank may do so. That necessarily carries with it the fixing of a minimum ratio between the bank's gold reserve and the amount of paper money which may be issued. Thus the circulation is anchored, at its outside limit, to a rather scarce physical commodity whose production cannot be rapidly increased. Much the same principle is applied to credit by fixing minimum ratios between bank reserves and loans.

Alert economists have pointed out, however, that the crucial factor in inflation is not the relation of the amount of money and credit to gold reserves, but their relation to the state of production and trade. The gold standard, to be sure, sets an upper limit to the amount of money and credit which may be issued, but this limit may be either too low or too high according to circumstances. Under the gold standard we have had crises caused by "tight money." Largely to avoid these, the Federal Reserve System was created and was provided with the means of expanding credit beyond the limit formerly existing.

During the War and after it, without abandoning the gold standard, we experienced a quite uncomfortable amount of inflation. The truth is that the size of the gold reserve may vary widely, that there is a still wider margin of variation possible for paper money based on it, and that credit may grow and contract most of all. The old theory that such growth and contraction occurs automatically according to the needs of business, and that attempts to control it are dangerous because they may be subject to political or other influence, is pretty generally abandoned. Whether you have a gold standard or not, you ought to have some approach to a "managed currency."

In its annual report a year ago the Federal Reserve Board gave clear indications that it now recognizes this fact. Such bits as the following are highly significant: "The economic use of credit is to facilitate the production and orderly marketing of goods and not to finance the speculative holding of excessive stocks of goods and merchandise. . . . When production reaches the limits imposed by the available supplies of labor, plant capacity, and transportation facilities—in fact, whenever the productive energies and resources of the country are employed at full capacity—output cannot be enlarged by an increased use of credit and by further increase in prices." And a rise in rediscount rates is intended, said the report, "to induce a more prudent attitude on the part of borrowers with regard to new commitments." In other words it is employed to restrict credit, to discourage borrowing for speculation rather than for production and trade, and so to check price advances.

But, as the Board points out, there are limitations to the usefulness of this measure. It cannot have an immediate effect on the volume of credit, for many commitments undertaken while the old rate was in force have still to be fulfilled. It cannot have much direct effect anyway unless the member banks are approaching the limit of their own resources and so must rediscount their loans at the central reserve banks. For it is only the rate of such rediscount which the Board can influence.

There is, however, a much more powerful instrument in the hands of the reserve banks. They can buy or sell securities in the open market. "The purchase of securities in the open market by a federal reserve bank places funds in the hands of member banks which these banks may use in repayment of borrowings from the reserve banks; the sale of securities, on the other hand, by withdrawing funds from the market may lead to additional borrowing from the reserve banks." When the central authorities want to loosen credit, they can buy securities; when they want to tighten it, they can sell securities and so force member banks to rediscount more of their loans at the reserve banks and take more account of the rediscount rate. "The difference betweeen discount operations and open-market operations is that the initiative in rediscounting lies with the member banks, while in the purchase or sale of securities the initiative may be taken by the reserve banks." So important was this instrument considered that a committee of reserve bank officers was formed to coördinate policy in dealings in securities.

A special situation limiting the control of the reserve authorities over credit has been the enormous inflow of gold into this country, which got into the reserves of local banks, and so enabled them to expand their loans directly without rediscounting. Such gold, usually deposited with the reserve banks, becomes also a part of the reserves of the whole system. As far as they could, the Federal Reserve Banks exerted their influence to prevent gold from becoming the cause of too great an expansion of credit by using it to a large extent as a basis for the issue of gold notes rather than as a basis for a much larger extension of loans to the member banks. Now, after gold imports amounting to $1,500,000,000 in four years, the tide has turned, due to the gradual reëstablishment of stable currency and credit for Europe, and the gold exports for the past three

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months totalled $120,000,000. As gold leaves our banks, federal reserve control of credits will become increasingly effective.

The discount and open-market policy of the Board is not determined by any mechanical formula or any direct hitching to price indices, as has sometimes been recommended. It is tentative, it is based on judgments derived from the whole economic situation, it is sometimes a little slow and perhaps overcautious. Yet it is intelligent. In a room in Washington there are displayed wall charts showing the production of basic industries, payrolls, employment, prices of various classes of commodities, and the state of the banking situation as shown in gold reserves, rediscount and market rates for different classes of loans, security holdings of the reserve banks, amount of rediscounted loans and of loans by the member banks, and so on. When it appears that production and employment are nearing their peak, a possible need for tighter credit is indicated. When they are on the down grade, the reins may be loosened. Early in the spring of 1924 when production and prices were rising sharply, the reserve banks raised rediscount rates. Later, when production was receding, they lowered rates. From August 8 to February 26 the New York Federal Reserve rediscount rate remained at 3 percent. During this period production reached its trough and turned up again. Now, when it is higher than the peak of 1923, and prices are rising, an upward tendency of rates is again apparent. The effect of this policy is partly mechanical, but largely psychological. As business comes to recognize the meaning of such changes, it is likely to adopt the desired course. And as the central authorities acquire more information and experience, they can use their influence with greater promptness and assurance. While the United States is technically on the gold standard, it is not relying on that fact for the regulation of currency and credit. England, whether she returns to the gold standard or not, will have to adopt similar policies.

Dr. Fosdick's Farewell

IF those passionate advocates of a new faith who, about two thousand years ago, went about in poverty and on foot, spreading their belief slowly and to few, in the open air, in small secret meetings, among the alleys and corners of Roman tyranny, numbering its millions to their scattered hundreds—if they could be here now, in this First Presbyterian church, on a great avenue of a tremendous city, they would be bewildered. They would find themselves in a large church, which would speak to them of triumph, tradition, stolidity; they would be surrounded by a multitude of prosperous people, gathered in what might seem to them every liberty of spirit and of circumstance. The Church, they might feel, had grown strangely, but it had grown to something like successful manhood. And they would rejoice that the small seeds so desperately sown by them in heathen deserts, had borne such vast, substantial fruit.

But if they stayed to listen, this first mood would be dispersed. They would be again bewildered, and saddened, and could not help feeling how little inward change had come with nineteen hundred years of outward growth. They would learn that the old quarrel was still being fought all over again, that old moulds still refused to be broken, that liberty was still on the defensive against all sorts of surviving chains, that today, let alone tomorrow, must still battle for its seat against the usurpation of dead yesterdays. They would witness the farewell of a leader, forced from his leadership because he could not do otherwise than "stand where once Paul stood," nor cease to be the opponent of an old Judaism, of rules and literal observances, of "circumcision, clean and unclean foods, Sabbath observance and the temple ritual and sacrifice."

To us, living in the present, and therefore not so discouraged by the thought of how little two thousand years have added to the mental and moral stature of the Church, the spectacle of Dr. Fosdick saying his last words to a deeply moved crowd of people who believe as he does, was exhilarating. It is courageous, and unusual, when those words which are your last by order of the sticklers for rules and rituals and creeds and the small type of the letter of the word of God are not used in anger or defiance. Dr. Fosdick did not arraign the old Judaists, he spoke over their heads and beyond them, vigorously, hopefully, intelligently, moderately. "We say farewell to each other, but let no man say farewell to the things we have been standing for."

The things he has been standing for have been well served by him, and when they come into their own—themselves perhaps to bow in turn before another tomorrow, they will thank him, and not forget that ringing, confident, unpretending American voice, that warm-hearted, sensible, courageous figure in a pulpit on a rainy Sunday morning, inspired to be a considerable figure in our time by things greater than himself, and in all humility not unaware of it.

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The Return Towards Gold

ONCE more the Bank chairmen of London have held up for our inspection their financial fashion-plates. The captions vary; but the plates are mostly the same. The first displays marriage with the gold standard as the most desired, the most urgent, the most honorable, the most virtuous, the most prosperous, and the most blessed of all possible states. The other is designed to remind the intending bridegroom that matrimony means heavy burdens from which he is now free; that it is for better, for worse; that it will be for him to honor and obey; and, in short, that he had better not be too precipitate. Some of our chairmen were like him who, being asked whether he believed that, when he was dead, he would enjoy perfect bliss eternally, replied that of course he did, but would rather not discuss such an unpleasant subject.

As last year, there are two distinct issues—the abstract merits of the gold standard, and the date and the mode of Great Britain's return to it. The first is a question about which, as Mr. McKenna justly said, "we are still in the stage of inquiry rather than of positive opinion, and there is no formulated body of doctrine generally regarded as orthodox." The supporters of Monetary Reform, of which I, after further study and reflection, am a more convinced adherent than before, as the most important and significant measure Great Britain can take to increase economic welfare, must expound their arguments more fully, more clearly, and more simply, before they can overwhelm the forces of old custom and general ignorance. This is not a battle which can be won or lost in a day. Those who think that it can be finally settled by a sharp hustle back to gold are wrong. That will be only the beginning.

The other issue is of practical and immediate importance. Last year it was a question of whether it was prudent to hasten matters by deliberate deflation; this year it is a question of whether it is prudent to hasten matters by a removal of the embargo against the export of gold. This year, as last year, the British bankers, faced with the practical problem, are a little nervous. I think that this nervousness is justified for the following reasons.

In common with many others, I have long held the opinion that monetary conditions in the United States were likely, sooner or later, to bring about a rising price level and an incipient boom; and also that it would be Great Britain's right policy in such circumstances to employ the usual methods to curb her own price level and to prevent her own credit conditions from following in the wake of those in America. The result of this policy, if it was successful, would be a gradual improvement of the sterling exchange; and it would not need a very violent boom in America to justify a rise of the sterling exchange at least as high as the pre-war parity. I have, therefore, maintained for two years past that a return of sterling, sooner or later, towards its pre-war parity would be both a desirable and a probable consequence of a sound monetary policy on the part of the Bank of England coupled with a less sound one on the part of the Federal Reserve Board.

What has actually happened? In the spring of 1923 boom conditions in the United States seemed to be developing; but largely through the action of the Federal Reserve Board, the movement was stopped. Since July, 1924, however, there has been a strong and sustained upward movement, which—subject always to the policy of the Federal Reserve Board—is expected to go further. The earlier upward movement of American prices was duly followed by an improvement in sterling exchange and the relapse by a relapse. Similarly, the movement of American prices during the past six months has been accompanied by the improvement in sterling exchange, which has caught the popular attention. As Mr. McKenna pointed out, sterling prices have been a little steadier than dollar prices, and this greater steadiness has involved, as its necessary counterpart, some unsteadiness in the exchange.

The movement of the past six months, however, has been complicated by abnormal factors. The improvement in sterling exchange is more than can be accounted for by our monetary policy. It is true that short-money rates have been maintained at an effective half percent above those in New York, and that British prices have risen somewhat less than American prices. But it is generally agreed that these influences have not been strong enough to account for everything. The Board of Trade returns indicate that there has been a movement of funds on capital account in the past year (and most of it, probably, in the second half of the year) from New York to London of the order of magnitude of $500,000,000. This is due (in proportions difficult to calculate) to the return of foreign balances previously held in London, to American investment in Europe resulting from the greater confidence engendered by the Dawes Scheme coming on the top of an investment boom in Wall Street, and to speculative purchases of sterling in the expectation of its improving in value relatively to the dollar. This unprecedented movement introduces a precarious element into the situation; Great Britain cannot expect that it will continue on the same scale, and it may, at any time, be partly reversed. Great Britain requires an interval, therefore, to readjust her liabilities either by a recovery of exports relatively to imports or by establishing a rate of interest on permanent loans high enough to check the present (in my judgment excessive) flow of new foreign investment outwards.

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What is going to happen next? There are two leading alternatives. It may be that the Federal Reserve Board will come to the conclusion that the incipient boom conditions in the United States are getting dangerous, and will take the position firmly in hand, just as they did two years ago. This, almost certainly, is what the Board ought to do. In this event, the situation would be back again very nearly where it was eighteen months ago, and Great Britain would be faced, as she was then, with the alternative of relatively steady sterling prices with the dollar exchange below parity, or of stern deflation in the effort to keep exchange at parity. A premature announcement of the removal of the embargo on the free export of gold would commit her in advance to the latter alternative—the alternative which we deliberately rejected two years ago. This is what the fanatics desire. But with the unemployment figures what they still are—worse than this time last year—it would not be wise.

The other alternative is that the Federal Reserve Board will allow matters to pursue their present course, in which event we may expect that dollar prices will advance a good deal further. During part of 1924 the Board's open-market policy was decidedly inflationary and has been largely responsible for the sharp rise of prices already experienced. At the present moment their policy is more cautious; but there is no clear indication that they have any steady or considered policy. It may be that misplaced sympathy with our efforts to raise the sterling exchange will be a factor tending to postpone action on their part; and if they delay much longer, boom conditions may become definitely established. In that event Great Britain need have no difficulty in raising sterling to pre-war parity. A firm monetary policy, designed to check a sympathetic rise of sterling prices, ought, without any positive deflation, to do the trick. But it does not follow that the embargo should, therefore, be removed. To link sterling prices to dollar prices, at a moment in the credit cycle when the latter were near their peak as the result of a boom which we had not fully shared, would ask for trouble. For when the American boom broke, Great Britain would bear the full force of the slump. The conditions in which she can link sterling prices to dollar prices without immediate risk to her own welfare, will only exist when the mean level of dollar prices appears to be *stabilized* at a somewhat higher level than in recent times.

The removal of the embargo amounts to an announcement that sterling *is* at parity with the dollar and will remain so. I suggest that the right order of procedure is to establish the fact first and to announce it afterwards, rather than to make the announcement first and to chance the fact. Thus the removal of the embargo should be the last stage in the restoration of pre-war conditions, not the first one. The only prudent announcement on the subject would be to the effect that the embargo will not be removed until after sterling has been at parity for some considerable time and until all the fundamental adjustments consequent upon this have duly taken place. At the same time—if we want to return to parity—steps should be taken to achieve the *fact* by raising the bank rate and checking foreign issues. Several of the bankers declared that they were in favor of removing the embargo, provided this did not involve a risk of raising the bank rate. Unless this was merely a polite way of saying that they were not in favor of removing the embargo, I do not follow their analysis of the present situation.

It would be useless for me to attempt in the space at my disposal to give the reasons for wishing to maintain permanently a Managed Currency. The most important of them flow from my belief that fluctuations of trade and employment are at the same time the greatest and the most remediable of the economic diseases of modern society, that they are mainly diseases of our credit and banking system, and that it will be easier to apply the remedies if we retain the control of our currency in our own hands. But, whilst avoiding these fundamental questions, I may mention, in conclusion, one practical argument which is also connected with what I have said above.

A gold standard for Great Britain means, in practice, nothing but to have the same price-level and the same money-rates (broadly speaking) as the United States. The whole object is to link *rigidly* the City and Wall Street. But an Englishman is bound to expect that this may be a dangerous proceeding.

The United States live in a vast and unceasing crescendo. Wide fluctuations, which spell unemployment and misery for Great Britain, are swamped for them in the general upward movement. A country, the whole of whose economic activities are expanding, year in, year out, by several percent per annum, cannot avoid, and at the same time can afford, temporary maladjustments. This was Great Britain's state during a considerable part of the nineteenth century. Her rate of progress was so great that stability in detail was neither possible nor essential. This is not her state now. Her rate of progress is slow at the best, and faults in her economic structure, which she could afford to overlook whilst we were racing forward and which the United States can still afford to overlook, are now fatal. The slump of 1921 was even more violent in the United States than in Great Britain, but by the end of 1922 recovery was practically complete. Great Britain still, in 1925, drags on with a million unemployed. The United States may suffer industrial and financial tempests in the years to come, and they will scarcely matter to her; but England, if she shares them, may almost drown.

And there is a further consideration. Before the War, Great Britain had lent great sums to the whole world which she could call in at short notice; her American investments made her the creditor of the

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United States; she had a surplus available for foreign investment far greater than that of any other country; with no Federal Reserve system American banking was weak and disorganized. Great Britain, in fact, was the predominant partner in the Gold Standard Alliance. But those who think that a return to the gold standard means a return to these conditions are fools and blind. Great Britain is now the debtor of the United States. Their foreign investments last year were double hers, and their true net balance available for such investment was probably ten times hers. They hold six times as much gold as she does. The mere *increase* in the deposits of the banks of the Federal Reserve System in the past year has been not far short of half Great Britain's *total* deposits. A movement of gold or of short credits either way between London and New York, which is only a ripple for them, will be an Atlantic roller for us. A change of fashion on the part of American bankers and investors towards foreign loans, of but little consequence to them, may shake us. If gold and short credits and foreign bonds can flow without restriction or risk of loss backwards and forwards across the Atlantic, fluctuations of given magnitude will produce in London effects altogether disproportionate to the effects in New York. It suits the United States that Great Britain should return to gold, and they will be ready to oblige us in the early stages. But it would be a mistake to believe that in the long run they will, or ought to, manage their affairs to suit our convenience.

What solid advantages will there be to set against these risks? I do not know. Our bankers speak of "psychological" advantages. But it will be poor consolation that "nine people out of ten" expected advantages, if none in fact arrive.

That our Bank chairmen should have nothing better to cry than "Back to 1914," and that they should believe that this represents the best attainable, is not satisfactory. The majority of those who are studying the matter are becoming agreed that faults in our credit system are at least partly responsible for the confusions which result in the paradox of unemployment amidst dearth. The "Big Five" have vast responsibilities towards the public. But they are so huge and, in some ways, so vulnerable, that there is a great temptation to them to cling to maxims, conventions, and routine; and when their chairmen debate fundamental economic problems, they are unfamiliar. It is doubtful, nevertheless, whether too much conservatism on these matters and too little of the spirit of inquiry will redound, in the long run, to their peace or security. Individualistic Capitalism in England has come to the point when it can no longer depend on the momentum of mere expansion; and it must apply itself to the scientific task of improving the structure of its economic machine.

J. M. KEYNES.

London.

I'm for the Fundamentalists

AS AN agnostic I have always voted the fundamentalist ticket in passing upon arguments in the church, although, so far as I know, I am the only one who does. In recent years I have had quite a number of these cases before me. They usually appear on the front page, and I take them under advisement along with my coffee and rolls. When the latter have disappeared I vote on church matters. Thus far the results are uniform, namely: one vote for the fundamentalists. I can't see it any other way.

Like most writing men I am familiar with the King James Bible. It is a valuable and extremely interesting book. In my youth I read it assuming in advance that I was a Christian, but it failed to convince me, so I ceased to be a Christian. It isn't clear to my mind how a man could do anything else under the circumstances. Of course if he happens to be in business, or has small town social aspirations, or crumples up at the prospect of shocking his family, then I can understand that he might string along with his crowd without doing great violence to his conscience, but I fail to see that this situation gives him a right to attack the fundamentals of other people's faith. So far as I know, all of the things the fundamentalists insist on are in the Bible. And the Bible is their source of authority.

As a matter of fact I am often impatient with the fundamentalists for throwing overboard so many planks for which they once battled even through blood. I don't think they had a right to do that. They assert that the basis of their religion is divine revelation, and they quite properly, under the circumstances, deny the theory of evolution, yet I catch them permitting religion to evolute. They ought not to do that. It is nothing less than backsliding. The Bible is crystal clear on the flatness and squareness of the earth, just as an example, yet very few Christians now defend these assertions. The Bible presents a brief and lucid story of how the waters were divided, part of the waters being placed just above the perfectly solid, sky-blue, inverted bowl under which we humans squirm about. It informs us that the sun was bidden to stand still, and did so, in order that a battle in which Jehovah was keenly interested might be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. I think all of these assertions ought to be defended. I am shocked from time to time when orthodox Christians object to other orthodox Christians communicating with the spirits of the departed. I find numerous precedents for these

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activities. Personally, I don't believe any of them, but I certainly wouldn't question the orthodoxy of another person for believing them.

I find some Christians believing in the effectiveness of prayers for rain and others doubting. I don't see how they can possibly doubt, and call themselves Christians. When I was a Christian I believed firmly in prayers for rain. Later I read a book or two explaining how the weather is forecast. But by that time I wasn't a Christian. It seems to me that a Christian who questions miracles has simply voted himself out of the fold. I don't see how he can possibly doubt them—as a Christian. They are offered by the dozens, beginning with Genesis and going right on through the New Testament. It is quite obvious, to me, at least, that the miracles were offered as the basic proof. It seems to me that a Christian has no choice but to accept them.

The fundamentalists will, of course, agree with me in this contention yet I find them teaching comparative anatomy in their medical colleges. And what is comparative anatomy? Just another name for evolution, or at least a half-brother to it, twist the definitions as you will. I don't think they ought to do that. In fact it is not clear to me that they have any right to teach modern surgery and medicine at all. They have fought virtually every step of its advance, sometimes with the rack and bonfire. But today I find them chasing evolutionists out of the classrooms where history and philosophy are taught but employing them in the medical schools. I call that backsliding. Of course, if they didn't employ evolutionists their medical schools wouldn't amount to much, but what makes them think they ought to have medical schools? The Bible furnishes plenty of information on how to cure disease. When I was a Christian I leaned very strongly toward Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy on this point. I'm not trying to be funny and I don't speak disrespectfully. It seems to me that a Christian is bound to consider Mrs. Eddy's position as at least not unreasonable. Since the earliest days of the church it has been the custom for its priests to intervene in cases of illness. They used to be summoned regularly in fever cases before quinine was introduced. Now I seldom hear of them working on anything except cancer. This is both evolutionary and backsliding in my opinion.

I don't wish to be unfair, and I think many agnostics are unfair, in their criticism of Christian beliefs. For instance they like to talk about witchcraft, belief in which was at one time declared absolutely essential. In the Bible I don't find it so at all. Witchcraft is merely recorded as something that existed. Some authorities punished witches and others consulted them. You can take your choice, so far as I can see, and still be a good Christian.

When so-called liberals begin introducing interpretations of clear statements, under the plea that they must harmonize religion with present-day thought I grow very sceptical. Even in my brief day I've seen amazing results from that sort of thing. In Texas, where I used to live, adherence to the cause of prohibition had grown into a fundamental article of Protestant Christian faith even ten years ago. Scores of men have been figuratively kicked out of church for not being prohibitionists. They could drink but they had to believe and vote. On that subject, like many others, I find the Bible not very explicit. Some authorities approved of wine, some didn't. All, however, seemed to drink it. I don't think prohibition under the circumstances ought to rank with the virgin birth, a point on which there is no dissenting voice. But the liberals and modernists and humanitarians of my boyhood days thought otherwise and they won their point. Today over a very large part of this country Sunday-school children are taught that the wine of the Cana feast was non-alcoholic. Such a statement strikes me as entirely too modern. I find no authority for it.

It seems to me that liberals and modernists and all their ilk in the organized churches receive unmerited sympathy from my fellow agnostics. The sympathy amounts at times to maudlin sentimentality. And at other times it is disgustingly hypocritical for it means nothing more than that the agnostic in question is delighted to find someone within a church fighting its creeds. He is pleased, I suspect, just as the Kaiser was pleased no doubt when he heard of an influential American being pro-German. I don't like that sort of thing. I object to it as a former Christian, as an agnostic, and as a man.

If I had been up on Mount Sinai and brought back a stone on which a code of laws had been miraculously chiselled I would believe in those laws, including the ones relating to slavery. If someone in whom I had absolute faith had brought back the laws I would still believe in them. And I would be a bigot, too. I wouldn't stand for any foolishness about the matter. Those would be my laws. And if someone else got another set of laws under miraculous circumstances and they didn't agree with my set of laws I would consider him a scoundrel and a liar. I don't understand how a person in possession of divine revelations in which he has absolute faith can feel any other way about it. If someone wanted to winnow my laws, keeping only part of them, I'd throw him out of my church.

Talk about broad-mindedness and liberality in connection with religions based upon divine revelation strikes me as sheer rot. About the things I know I'm not at all broadminded. For instance, two and two are four. If you don't believe that there's something wrong with you and I wouldn't deal with you on any matter involving arithmetic. However, an agnostic can prove most of the things he believes. What he takes on faith he doesn't get sufficiently excited about to hurt anyone. A man

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is broadminded and liberal only on those subjects about which he is not certain. As his intelligence grows, this list becomes very, very long. The length of it is the most accurate measurement we have of a man's degree of civilization. Personally I don't think a man has gone very far on the road to civilization until he has generated a first-rate doubt about miracles, including divine revelations. Fortunately most men nowadays do generate such doubts. Consequently we have very few religious wars except in extremely backward countries where faith is still unimpaired.

More than half of the populations of the so-called Christian nations of the earth are agnostic, differing only as to degree. As a sincere, forward-looking liberal, I earnestly desire that these agnostics increase in number. I feel sure that this will make for greater happiness for them and at the same time vastly advance the brotherhood of man. When we don't know where we came from and haven't the slightest notion beyond a hope where we are going there is very little joy in killing each other. When all we are sure of is a fitful hour upon this earth we are moved to great sympathy for any fellow human who is spending that hour in misery. The tragedy of it is immeasurably increased for agnostics since they are not at all certain that misery here purchases a ticket on the Pearly Gates Limited. They have a bull-headed, materialistic belief that everything that has ever been done for mankind, mankind did. They even hold to the shocking belief that agnostics have performed far more than their share of these services. That's why I'm hoping for their number to increase. That is also why I invariably vote for the fundamentalists. I want them to hold firm the faith, not only against the theory of evolution but against the evolution of revealed religion. I want them to keep it pure and undefiled. What were they doing with smoked glasses during the recent eclipse, I'd like to ask. The whole business of forecasting eclipses rests upon the work of men who laughed scornfully at the Christian's cosmos and so far as I can see made a joke of it. Christians might properly scorn such eclipses, it seems to me, since they are able to roll their own. Or were, until the blighting effects of modernism smote them. Down with modernism, I say. Let's have a fair, square fight to a finish, with the fundamentalists sticking to The Book from cover to cover and no agnostic bootlegging sympathy for half-hearted persons in the enemy's camp.

CHESTER T. CROWELL.

Charles, the Bean-Spiller

ELMER looked out upon the gray March world through the front window of his little news shop. He saw Oscar Binns engaged in the leisurely task of taking down the flags which the patriotic and Republican government of Woppington had planted at intervals in the sidewalks of Main Street.

"How Oscar loves a job of work that only turns up every four years!"

Elmer said this to himself and again to Homer Graves, a young farmer who had just arrived in a muddy Ford and a sheepskin coat.

"You must be all wore out watching him," said Homer. "Let's get us some cooking cigars and sit down. Well, I suppose everything went off all right in Washington yesterday? I haven't been in town for a week—the roads are so bad."

"Then you haven't heard the terrible news?"

Homer looked startled.

"You don't mean some crank—"

"No, nothing like that. Just the same it was a very gloomful affair. If I only had a snifter of tear gas I could do my stuff better." It was clear that Elmer was having a gorgeous time.

"Everything was clicking so pretty, too, when it happened. It was all set to be the classiest little inauguration we ever pulled off—for the money. Of course Coolidge's little playmates are not natural-born spenders like Harding's and all the blah-blah about economy kept down the gate some but there were plenty of people, at that, and the groans of dying hotel keepers meant nothing in their young lives.

"Putting two and two together, it was a large, juicy fourth of March. About the middle of the morning the Sixty-eighth Congress kicked off in horrible agony, which is the only thing it ever did without getting the razz. By this time nineteen governors were in circulation all willing to be lamped by the eager populace if needful. The original Coolidge man, ten thousand strong, was flocking up Pennsylvania avenue. The Vermont delegation was eating its thrifty lunch out of a shoe box and resting its sturdy, solid, God-fearing, New England feet. Over in the State Department Hughes was packing up his nifty legal mind and getting ready to beat it to New York and the fat pickings; Nervous Nelly Kellogg was trying to make his knees behave; Colonel Coolidge was remembering things that happened a long time ago, if ever; Democrats were sneaking up dark alleys gnawing their knuckles. It was a happy and inspiring scene.

"All this time a man with a trick pipe and a face that doesn't fit very well was circulating around with a flock of photographers and reporters and hating it like an actor hates his name in electric lights. Keep your eye on that shrinking violet,

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Homer; because he's the one that steals the chee-ild. Along about eleven o'clock the glad tidings breezed up toward the Big Dome that the Great White Father had signed the pay raise bill. You see Cal had been pulling a lot of tight-wad stuff down there at the other end of the Avenue, cutting down the overhead on drinking cups and erasers and keeping a horse that can't eat oats, and the hill-billies were feeling pretty jumpy. They'd been sinking the harpoon into Calvin's system pretty regular anyhow and he should worry if their children's little blue toes were sticking out into Washington society. But now he had done the right thing for once and they were ready to forgive and forget and give him the Chatauqua salute when he came up to hear the good news.

"But first they all had to pile into the Senate to get this Dawes business out of their system. They break the news to the Vice-President first, you know, because otherwise everybody would go home but the janitor. According to Hoyle the V. P. is entitled to one squawk before the total eclipse; after that he gets about as much attention as a book agent in Hollywood.

"Well, all the politicians out of jail were packed in there nice and chummy with their hands in each other's watch pockets and they pinned the tin on the General and let him loose. Did he hand 'em a lot of apple sauce about how they are the finest old scouts his aged eyes have ever rested upon? Did he gurgle with glee at being a member of the club? He did not, Homer. It pains my face to say it. He told 'em they're a bunch of gas-bags and time-wasters. He raved around and he pounded the desk and he gnawed a ragged hole in Rule 22. I suppose a hick like you don't know Rule 22?"

"I don't even know Rule 21," said the honest farmer.

"Well, Rule 22 provides for the free and unlimited coinage of words—and a senator doesn't think any more of his oratory rights than he does of his right eye. Some of those old birds were so wrathy they wouldn't even go out on the front porch to hear Coolidge speak his nice little piece.

"What's the answer? Are the people of Woppington today talking about the President's masterly address? Not any such. They're gassing about how Charlie Dawes spilled the beans. Wouldn't you know that old loose-face would horn in and snag the spotlight?

"They're soaping the chute for Hell an' Maria now. Before the Senate and Dawes get through with each other that dump will look like Old Home Week in Herrin, Illinois."

"Just the same, Elmer, there's something in what he says. Those senators talk too blame much."

"You said something there, Homer, I'm not throwing in with them at all. When Dawes goes to the mat with the U. S. Senate I'm rooting for a flock of funerals on both sides."

FELIX RAY.

The Stieglitz Exhibition

IN Miss Georgia O'Keeffe America seems definitely to have produced a woman painter comparable to her best woman poets and novelists. Her new paintings in the Stieglitz exhibition at the Anderson Galleries are astonishing even to those who were astonished by her first exhibition two years ago; and they seem to represent a more considerable growth in her art for the period of the past year than the exhibition of last spring did for that of the year before. For one thing, she has gone in for larger canvasses; she has passed from the close-rolled white lilies of her last phase to enormous yellow lilies and wide-open purple petunias. Yet at the same time that she has allowed her art to expand in this decorative gorgeousness, she has lost nothing in intensity—that peculiarly feminine intensity which has galvanized all her work and which seems to manifest itself, as a rule, in such a different way from the masculine. Men, as a rule, in communicating their intensity, seem not only to incorporate it in the representation of external objects but almost, in the work of art, to produce something which is itself an external object and, as it were, detachable from themselves; whereas women seem to charge the objects they represent with so immediate a personal emotion that they absorb the subject into themselves instead of incorporating themselves into the subject. Where men's minds may have a freer range and their works of art be thrown out further from themselves, women artists have a way of appearing to wear their most brilliant productions—however objective in form—like those other artistic expressions, their clothes. So the razor-like scroll-edges of Miss O'Keeffe's magnified autumn leaves make themselves felt directly as the sharpness of a personality; and the dark green stalks of one of her "Corn" pictures have become so charged by her personal current and fused by her personal heat that they have the aspect of some sort of dynamo of feeling constructed not to represent but to generate, down the centre of which the fierce white line strikes like an electric spark. This last picture, in its solidity and life, seems to me one of her most successful.

One finds also among these new paintings remarkable effects of fluidity and vagueness; her white birches are mistier than last year and she has discovered a new subject in the shifting of water over the pebbly bottom of a lake. In other pictures, she combines the blurred and the sharp to produce violent dissonances; and this insistence on dissonance is one of the most striking features of the exhibition. Miss O'Keeffe seems bent on bringing together things which cannot possibly live in the same picture—not only vagueness and sharpness, but mutually repellent colors. In some pictures, which seem less successful, this gives the impression of a fault of taste. Thus, we see a red leaf painted on a green background in such a way as to give a harmony in bronze, but on the green leaf a neutral brownish leaf which jars with the other colors and seems irreconcilable with them. Again, in one of her most elaborate pictures, Red to Black, there appears above a rich foundation of flesh-like folds occupying half the canvas and in her vividest vein of red, a stratum of black, not intense, as the eye expects after the intense red, but discomfitingly washy and dim, and above this a light superstructure of sketchily outlined hills whose pinks and lavenders seem quite out of key with the deep reds and purples below; the whole effect is of an inartistically feathered and overweighted shuttle-cock dragged too heavily

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to earth. But in other pictures it seems plain that these anomalies are deliberate and significant and we recognize them as analogous to the dissonances of modern poetry and music. A sunken tree-trunk is seen in the water, a blurred brown under turbid green—but there floats above it a single leaf of blue-silver as livid and bright as the mercury tubes in photographers' windows and so distinctly outlined that it almost seems impossible for the eye to see both leaf and log with the same focus. Again, from a preliminary study of a plain white house with a dark open doorway, set in the greenery and lilac-bushes of spring, she develops an abstract picture (The Flag Pole) in which the actual outlines of the house have melted away into the exquisite mist of lavender and green but the rectangle of the doorway has intensified itself to black opacity and geometrical exactness in such sharp relief that it seems actually to have been projected out from the plane of the picture and to hang in the air before it. One becomes fascinated by these discords at the same time that one is shocked by them: one stares long trying to eliminate or soften the repulsion between these opposites—the harsh rectangle and the aura of springtime, the dim lake and the incandescent leaf.

Georgia O'Keeffe outblazes the other painters in the exhibition—Marin, Hartley, Dove and Demuth—but it is impossible to compare her with them—even in those pictures which are closest to hers: the white-silver and black storm-clouds of Dove. If the art of women and the art of men have, as I have suggested, fundamental differences, they sometimes seem incommensurable. The water-colors of Mr. Marin are masculine masterpieces: they are the investiture of nature with the distinction of a distinguished temperament: some of the Maine seascapes, with their greens and blues and white sails, with their incomparable combination of dryness with freshness, are among the finest Marins I have seen. Mr. Marsden Hartley appears with his characteristic repertoire of plain fishes and bottles and plates, which he embrowns or dully empurples with his characteristic sullen felicity.

Mr. Stieglitz, who celebrates with this exhibition the twentieth anniversary of the opening of 291 Fifth Avenue, the small gallery with which the development of most of the painters here shown has been so intimately associated, exhibits new examples of his amazing genius for forcing the camera to become an instrument of the artist's sensibility—a genius of a sort so unusual that between the productions of Mr. Stieglitz and the photographs of the ablest of his rivals there seems to lie a difference not merely of degree but almost of kind. Mr. Stieglitz, in pushing his mastery of the camera further from mechanical reproduction and closer and closer to the freedom of plastic art, has lately deserted the earth altogether and taken to the clouds, where he seems to have found a material of maximum variability. The shapes and textures of the sky are infinitely irregular and strange, and they are never twice the same—so that the artist can have practically anything he likes. Furthermore, the person who looks at the picture is never distracted from the artist's intention by recognizing familiar objects, familiar subjects of photographs. One finds effects of a feathery softness or of a marmoreal solidity which, nonetheless, do not remind one in the least of either feathers or marble. Some of Mr. Stieglitz's recent experiments in this field are, I suppose, among his greatest triumphs. Especially impressive among these newest photographs are certain masses of striking sombreness and grandeur which lift themselves as if in grief.

EDMUND WILSON.

Abie's Irish Rose

THE sign over the theatre says "1199th performance." And every performance has been full. And there is another company in Chicago. And there are other facsimiles of this gold mine touring Canada and the rest of the United States. One of them is said to have played in Lehigh, Pa., for twenty-nine weeks. Companies in England too. An offer of one million dollars for the movie rights has been refused. Altogether, Miss Anne Nichols, who wrote the play, produced it, valiantly kept it alive at the beginning when nobody else thought it would succeed, who controls the original great grandfather at the Republic Theatre, and all its progeny on tour as well, is in a fair way to clear two or three million dollars. It's the phenomenon of the age. Only a handful of California forty-niners ever made as much out of their glittering pay dirt as she has made out of this—well let's not call it names. Let's go and see it instead.

One enters the theatre determined to catch the secret of Abie's success. Many more than a million people have seen it, thousands have seen it more than once, many have seen it a dozen times, and brought all their friends. There must be a secret. Bad plays are often popular, but not as popular as this. Abie's Irish Rose must have some great simple human virtue that endears it to its millions. . . .

First Act. Jewish Interior. A prosperous, nondescript apartment. Three Jewish "characters": Mrs. Cohen, fat and voluble, always talking about her operation for appendicitis, Mr. Cohen, ridiculously small, bearded, jumpy, blinking eyes through tortoise-shell glasses. Solomon Levy, middle-aged, father-type, Jewish clothing merchant comedian, with skull-cap. A crackle of broad repartee. The house laughs. A few real wise-cracks. The house comes down. Mr. Levy is talking about his son, Abie, his hopes for him, and how Abie has brought lots of girls to the house, none of them Jewish.

> Mr. Levy: "I vant grandchildren, dozens and dozens of them."
>
> Mr. Cohen: "Listen—right avay he talks wholesale!"

The stage is empty. Enter Abie and his girl. They have secretly been married the week before by a Methodist minister. Her name is Rosemary Murphy. She is Irish (Abie is Jewish—don't forget this point). Enter papa Levy. "What's your name?" "Rosemary." "I don't like that name—What's your last name?" Abie comes to the rescue. "Murfisky!" The house roars. Mr. Levy is completely taken in. Already he is charmed by her. Wedding next week. Rose and the Cohens stay to dinner. Jokes about kosher food. Curtain with everybody happy.

This act is fairly amusing. It bears, at times, a recognizable resemblance to real life. Some of the lines are quite funny. But the house roars nearly all the time. What they laugh at would strike you and me as harmless, mild, and very, very obvious. The outlines of the characters are painted in with a brush at least a mile wide. And all of them are lovable. All but one are Jewish, and three of them thoroughly, unmistakably, ridiculously Jewish, with an accent a foot thick, and bits of Yiddish thrown in.

Second Act. The Wedding. The apartment is decorated with ribbons and flowers and two orange trees, dazzlingly fruitful with real oranges. Rosie, as she is now called, hopes that her father, Patrick Murphy, will not arrive on

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time. He will be terribly angry. He has been told that Abie is Irish. Mrs. Cohen is summoned from next door.

Mr. Levy: "She hasn't any appendix, but she's a nice woman."

This is the next best line in the whole play. The house roars. Not for the last time. Enter Abie, in a well-fitting dress suit. Enter Mr. Levy in same plus skull-cap. The suit cost $59.98. Roars. Enter Mr. Cohen, about four feet high, in same, wearing a high hat. Enter Father Samuels. A rabbi, but otherwise not Jewish-looking, and far from Jewish-spoken. Here comes the bride. Procession of brides-maids. The wedding is in the next room. Mr. Levy, humming Hebrew wedding hymn, tarries emotionally alone, jams high hat on over skull cap, and exits. Enter Patrick Murphy, very burly, very Mavourneen-sham-rock-begorrah Irish, with Father Whalen. Father Whalen does not look particularly Irish, nor is he Irish-spoken. He is a priest. Awkward pause. The wrong house? A Jewish wedding? Then the awful deceit breaks. Murfisky! Twenty minutes of burlesque anger and explanations, giving opportunity for every variety of cart-horse-play. Murphy squares off, doubles his fists, rolls up his cuffs three separate times, hoots and shouts at the Jewish scene, at the names, at Mr. Cohen in his high hat. For a moment the priest and the rabbi are left alone. The house is suddenly hushed, with the discipline of a well-trained chorus. A very different stop is apparently going to be pulled out, a solemn stop, and they obey. Rabbi Samuels and Father Whalen were both in France with the A. E. F. "I ministered to many of the boys of your faith." Solemn platitudes on the sofa. The hush continues. They think they have met before—it was in France, but they never go on to try to discover just where. Suffice it that they were in France together, and agree that religion was no bar there, and that Jews, Catholics and Protestants are all going to the same place. . . . After the broad gauge humor of the other scenes, this little intervention, with its hasty bathos and insincerity, makes one profoundly uncomfortable. All the more uncomfortable because all one's neighbors seem to like it.

As the ceremony just completed seems to have been void and null, Father Whalen, forever kind and just, performs another. They are tied tight.

Third Act. In Abie and Rosie's apartment. A baby. Neither father has helped them, and they have been having a hard time. A Christmas tree, surmounted by the six-pointed star. Rose, crooning an Irish song, takes the baby off-stage. Enter Mr. and Mrs. Cohen. Roars. More broad comedy. Jokes about ham. Roars and roars. . . . The stage is empty. Enter Father Whalen, followed by Patrick Murphy, with a large toy wrapped up. If it's a girl, he'll give them a lot of money. Exit. Enter Rabbi Samuels, followed by Mr. Levy, with a large bundle of toys. If it's a boy, he'll give them a lot of money. The two fathers catch each other unwrapping the bundles. Declaration of comic war. One hopes for a girl, the other for a boy. A baby is brought in. A girl. Murphy croons over her. Then—everybody saw it coming, which made their pleasure all the greater—a boy, for Levy. Twins! The fathers are reconciled. The races unite. Happiness, sweetness, peace, just reward, barrels of syrupy oil on artificial waves.

If one did not go to see Abie's Irish Rose as a phenomenon, the play, which begins with mild, broad fun in the first act, and broadens rapidly toward the end with interludes of pure sentimentality and sermonizing, would be progressively depressing, and one would leave all the more sad because all the rest of the audience liked it so uproariously. But since it is worth about three million dollars, one's chief interest is in trying to find out the great secret—why do people like it, love it, swallow it, shout at it, go away and come back with their friends for more?

One can think of a dozen reasons. It is nice to everybody. The Jews are made fun of, their persons on the stage are lovable caricatures, they wear skull-caps, eat ham and don't care for Christmas trees. But they are never insulted. Patrick Murphy is furious, but he never calls Levy either Yid, Kike, or Sheeny, which is what he would do in real life. There is nothing said to sting the Jews. The mockery is restricted to religion. Race is kept entirely out of the dialogue and action, and is only implicit in the make-up and speech of the characters.

The spirit is the same of get-together. The feelings of people who, belonging to whatever race or religion, find that race and religion disliked by their neighbors, are soothed and warmed. People want salve, for most people are wounded somewhere, sometimes. At Abie's Irish Rose all wounds are salved. The audience is warm and happy every minute they are in their seats.

There is no villain. Everybody on the stage is likable. Everybody loves everybody else. Everybody in the end is happy. Everything succeeds.

The humor never flags. The house titters or roars, and one's neighbors break into shouts of glee and nudge each other. It is the greatest common multiple of humor, the broad open-work humor that millions shake at every time somebody slips on a banana peel. But in this play so full of banana peels nobody ever gets hurt.

Nothing succeeds like success. People will go to see Abie's Irish Rose because it has been running three years, because all their friends have seen it, if for no other reason.

But still we haven't laid our hands on the secret. There must be a deeper reason than all these, a more human, a more subtle one. Eleven hundred ninety nine performances! What is it? How can the magic combination be found again? How would you like three million dollars? Go after the secret!

Perhaps there isn't any. Perhaps there is. Toss a coin.

ROBERT LITTELL.

Washington Notes

NOW that the Longworths have landed the Speakership, it will be interesting to see what they do with it. It is no secret that the family ambition is so to utilize the opportunities of the position as again to make it accurate to describe the Speaker as the most powerful official in Washington, next to the President. This does not in the least forecast foolish and futile attempts to revert to the old days when the Speaker was the "Tsar," or in any way to alter the House rules so as to clothe the Speaker with dictatorial powers. Those days are forever gone. No such idea is in the Longworth head, but what is there is to establish "Nick" as the real leader of the House. That is neither a far-fetched nor a fanciful notion. On the contrary, it is entirely practicable.

With the prestige of the presiding officer added to his personal popularity, his influential party connections and support, plus his wife's conceded political sagacity and

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charm, there is no reason why "Nick" should not become the leader as well as the Speaker.

It ought to be easy for him to centre around himself a small group of men in the next House who could, for all practical purposes, invest him with as much legislative power as Cannon ever had, without the change of a rule. My belief, based on what I know of the plans, is that Speaker-elect Longworth will be a far more forceful figure than any presiding officer since Cannon, and that in the Sixty-ninth Congress guidance for the regular Republican organization will come from the chair, not from the floor.

Now that they have something worth while, the Longworths are going to play the political game with a zest and daring that will make some of the railbirds on the political fence dizzy with delight.

Talking about the Speakership makes me think of the former Speaker, now Senator, Gillett. That spontaneous burst of applause that came from the House members gathered in the Senate Chamber on inauguration day, when Mr. Gillett's name was called, and, on the arm of the pious Mr. Butler, he started up the aisles to be sworn in as junior senator from Massachusetts, accentuated a rather embarrassing situation that has risen. It confirmed Senator Gillett's conviction that, as a former Speaker of the House, he is entitled to far more consideration and carries considerably more weight than the ordinary newly elected senator. He has not, I am told, hesitated to make known this feeling to Senate leaders and to indicate he expected not only good committee assignments but a seat well up toward the front on the Republican side. "Let Butler take the back row. That's where he belongs. This is his first public office, but not mine. I have been in Congress for thirty-three years and Speaker of the House for six. I am entitled to be treated as well as the best."

That has been the ex-Speaker's view, and it has certainly made an impression on his colleagues. But it was not sufficiently deep an impression to get him what he wanted. Instead of Foreign Relations, he landed on the Judiciary Committee and his seat is in the rear row on the Republican side—just as is Senator Butler's.

There is among some of the senatorial leaders a disposition to resent somewhat the Gillett assumption that he is in any way entitled to priority over other members of the Senate sworn in for the first time. To them, all he now is is a "baby" senator, entirely regardless of what he may have been before. Two circumstances, however, will help Senator Gillett to a better recognition than that given the average member. One is his advanced age and the general belief that this term will be his last as well as his first. The other is his undeniable closeness to Mr. Coolidge. It is interesting to note that there is already some uncertainty in the minds of senators as to which Massachusetts senator —Butler or Gillett—really is the presidential mouthpiece, through which he will choose in the next session to make known his views, how and by whom the White House word will be passed. Some slight rivalry between these two new Massachusetts members of the Senate seems inevitable although there will be no outward or visible sign of such, and they will at all times maintain an appearance of the most cordial, not to say affectionate, relations.

Aside from the fact that no man with the morose and mournful nature of Senator Butler can achieve successful leadership in such a body as the United States Senate, even with the support of a newly elected President, there is another reason why members of Congress are not inclined to "tie up" with him politically, except in a temporary and casual way. That reason is the apparently well-grounded suspicion that his senatorial career is extremely apt to be a brief one. Mr. Butler, it will be recalled, was appointed to the Senate to succeed the late Senator Lodge, but the appointment holds only until the 1926 election. If he is then elected, it will be merely for the unexpired portion of Lodge's term, and he must again come up for election in 1928. Thus the Democrats will have a chance at him with both barrels. If they don't get him with one, they will with the other. At least that is their present feeling.

Just before he left Washington, I talked with Senator "Dave" Walsh, and if anyone doubts that he will be a candidate next year against Mr. Butler, then I do not think they have talked with him, or, if they have talked with him, they have not understood him. As a matter of fact he started to run as soon as he dropped off the train in Boston and he will not stop until election day, November, 1926.

When you consider that, in the great Republican state of Massachusetts, "Dave" Walsh has been twice elected governor, and once, senator; that last November, while he was defeated by 18,000 votes, he got nearly a hundred thousand more than Lodge did four years ago, and many more than Davis and La Follette combined, and that he was almost elected in a Republican landslide of unprecedented proportions, it can be grasped that he is something of a vote-getter. There are some political judges who regard his vote-getting record as stronger than that of the redoubtable "Al" Smith himself and cite figures to prove it. Doubt of his ability to beat Butler in 1926 has not entered "Dave's" mind. I do believe that if he were able to pick his Republican opponent for next year, Butler would be his first choice.

So long as business keeps booming and people are prosperous, there is not only no public disposition to be critical of Mr. Coolidge, but nothing he does or fails to do seems wrong. What the business man, big and little, wants is that things stay exactly as they are. Action, at the White House and in Congress, isn't the thing he desires; inaction is. That is why no Congress and no President we have ever had has suited the great financial forces quite as well as the last Congress and the present President. And what suits those forces, suits the metropolitan newspapers, the owners of which with a few exceptions have the same slant on politics and public affairs as the great bankers and industrialists.

That explains, perhaps, how Mr. Coolidge can still hold with the public generally, and particularly with the business element, a practically undiminished reputation for strength, courage, and wisdom, of the lack of which qualities he has given complete and repeated evidence.

When the facts are considered, it is almost incredible that the American people, busy and prosperous though they be, should not be concerned. Through two sessions of Congress, with his own party in power, and, for the last three months, with all the prestige of an overwhelming victory, the President has not only not secured from Congress a single thing he asked, but every recommendation he made

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has been rejected, and every policy he proposed contemptuously disregarded. There is not space here to enumerate, but the list is a long one. The climax came in the passage by Congress of a bill increasing its pay to the tune of $1,300,000 in the face of the Coolidge plea for economy and the absurd White House drinking cup and wash room savings. And did this White House economist veto the bill and bring Congress to heel? He did not. He waited until the last minute, signed the bill without a word and then went out on the East portico, took the oath of office and delivered another address on economy.

It isn't a question of whether the raise is justified or not. It is a question of squaring the President's press-agented economy preaching with his acts. It does not take courage to cut down the drinking cups; it would have taken courage to veto that bill—and he did not have it. Of course the fact is he was "talked to" before the raise was proposed, and there was never any doubt about his signing the bill in spite of the fact that he hated the idea and realized it made his simple savings at the White House seem absurd.

There is a classical story of a British sea captain who was so profane that he would split a "God-damn" in the middle to insert some added blasphemy. And some folks seem to think that the new presiding officer of the Senate will use up all the dees and damns in the font in addressing the senators from New York and Montana.

Take it from one who knew Charlie Dawes when he was buying second-hand gas companies and being understudy to Mark Hanna that no such thing will happen. Dawes is at heart a mild and unblasphemous man. The world seems to have grasped the Dawes profanity from the wrong end. "Helen Maria" and not Hell and Maria was the expletive of a man so chaste in his language as to avoid even commercial and standardized damns. There isn't a congressman or an admiral in Washington who wouldn't and couldn't outswear the man Dawes, now called "General."

For years Dawes was unable to avert "Charlie." He was gently born and softly reared and suffered under excellent manners. Nature gave him no guttural tones nor harsh speech. He couldn't frighten a scrub woman with his voice and he was always prone to tears. I have seen him moved by an old soldier's appeal for a Thanksgiving dinner which was obviously professional. And his first functioning after getting surplus wealth was to build a flop-house for the poor. He would rather be composing a little aria than crushing a commercial competitor. And the character of his musical output—its gentle and pacific character—will be testified to by any radio fan who has listened in on recent and frequent rendition of Charlie's one piece. Our hero has a soft brown eye and a mouth that any girl would be envious of—a sort of Cupid's bow and all that. Lately he has tried to pull down its corners and live up to his frightful military reputation. What is it the psychos say about suppressed complexes? Did you ever know a little Lord Fauntleroy who didn't want to wear long ragged patched pants and chew tobacco? "General" Dawes is a little Fauntleroy chewing tobacco. He never smoked a pipe in the old days. He probably picked that up from the British officers when he was playing soldier.

Charlie Dawes was an "under-cover" agent, as my friend Bill Burns would say, for Mark Hanna in the pre-convention campaign of 1895-96. He operated from a little top room in the Union League Club in Chicago and one of the bellboys who assisted him at that time is now connected with his trust company business. When Charlie got through being Comptroller of the Currency under McKinley he decided to get rich. Before that he and Perry Heath had been buying up small town gas companies and after modernizing them issued new blocks of stock against them. So he went to some prominent Chicago Hebrews and borrowed money enough to open a bank, the Central Trust Company of Illinois. God did the rest. One morning Charlie awoke to find that oil had been discovered on some of his gas company lands out in Iowa. That is why he is now heavily in the Prairie Oil Company which figures prominently in the legal proceedings being conducted by the government under the drilling of Messrs. Pomerene and Robinson. Charlie didn't mean to get as rich as he is but the oil just poured in on him and smeared him all up. Like all very rich men in politics Charlie Dawes is timid; hence he sees red revolution right around the corner and functions to check it by the aid of minute men and sentinels of the republic and all that sort of thing. Ralph Easley and Dawes are spiritual brothers. They experience the same kind of nightmares and the same subconscious motivations.

The outburst on inauguration day was an exception. Hereafter we will probably have a more pacific picture of Charlie. We will hear more of his amiability and less of the Helen Maria expletives. As presiding officer of the Senate Charlie will have to study some. He isn't literary and hates to read anything but stock returns.

T. R. B.

Washington.

Lot's Daughter

Two great continents afire
Staining the world darker than Tyre,
Made a double torch of flame
Terrible beyond a name.

Living people ran and fell
Into a huge and fiery well,
Heaving, writhing till the wind,
Like an eye, was blotted blind.

Only a hermit here and there
Picked his refuge to the air
And would not let the flame confuse
His wisdom from the way to choose.

One among them, still a child,
Like the oldest hermit smiled.
He smiled because he was seasoned sure,
Hers was a smile untouched and pure.

And then they saw her turn and pause
For love or pity or some cause,
They saw her watching like a lover
First one fire, then the other.

Was she foolish or at fault—
The only thing that turned to salt?
Was something small within her eyes?
Must no one care when a people dies?

WITTER BYNNER.

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A Scientific Approach to Criticism

Principles of Literary Criticism, by I. A. Richards. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.75.

SOME time ago, having occasion to outline a possible scientific approach to the problem of literary criticism, the present reviewer expressed a hope that a critic might appear who, possessed of both literary and scientific equipment, would attempt this task in extenso. Mr. Richards, in his Principles of Literary Criticism, if he does not entirely fulfil this hope, at any rate makes an extraordinarily interesting beginning. He is erudite and he is intelligent; he makes the courageous attempt to be at the same time scientific and psychological; and he has the great advantage of having at his disposal a knowledge of semantics. Many of the principles employed in The Meaning of Meaning (in which he collaborated with Mr. C. K. Ogden) he is able to apply with excellent effect in his search for a scientific approach to criticism. In fact, the present book is in some respects an amplification of certain chapters in the earlier one, notably those entitled The Meaning of Beauty and Symbol Situations.

It will inevitably be objected by adherents of the purely "æsthetic" approach (which ought by now to be an exploded idea) that any such attempt must simply be an unwarrantable and fruitless substitution of one set of terms (psychological) for another set (literary). "He tickles this age"—one hears them quote—

"who can
Call Tullia's ape a marmosyte,
And Leda's goose a swan."

But no sensible person, who is not blinded by idolatry of the arts, will object to the substitution of a set of terms which is carefully defined for a set which—notoriously—is so vague as to be practically meaningless. In this regard, Mr. Richards's procedure is admirable. His terms are clear, useful, and conveniently few. Whether they would in all items be approved by all psychologists is perhaps immaterial. The lay or literary critic can find here no cause for complaint. His disagreements can profitably be only on matters more general.

Of these, unfortunately, it is possible to suggest, in a short review, only one or two. Mr. Richards's book is a crowded one—perhaps too crowded for wholly successful statement, or for what he would term "communicative efficacy." On a great many points, and at a good many levels of his theme, he is illuminating. On the function of rhythm, on the distinction between symbolic and emotive statement, in his destructive analyses of the many divergent views of art which have been held in the past, in his analysis of the mode of thought and its relation to language and art, he is extremely helpful. His difficulty has been in giving, to material so complex and diverse, an arrangement. He has not succeeded in bringing it together in such a way that his thesis might stand forth: he leaves too much necessity to his reader for cross-reference and for disentanglement of the essential from the inessential. One has the feeling that, pondering too long, and using too many notes, he has lost his way a little. A summary, such as that used in The Meaning of Meaning, would have been very useful. And instead of so many short chapters, all at one level of emphasis, fewer and longer ones would have been better.

Briefly, Mr. Richards suggests that, having rid ourselves of the mythological concepts of "Beauty" and "pure æsthetic contemplation," we must judge a work of art (1) according to the value of the mental experience it offers us; and (2) the efficacy with which that experience is communicated. A good work of art is that in which the experience is valuable and successfully communicated (symbolized). A defective work of art is that in which the experience is valuable, but the communication only partially successful. A bad work of art is that in which, no matter how skilful the communication, the experience offered is itself worthless. This appears fairly simple. It is when we discuss the nature of "value" and "communicative efficacy" that we begin to encounter serious difficulties and to murmur our provisos. Mr. Richards, in his definition of value, follows, a good deal more than he likes to admit, the Freudian lead. An experience, he says, is valuable in accordance as it organizes and uses without waste "conflicting impulses." The poet's experiences "represent conciliations of impulses which in most minds are still confused, intertrammelled, and conflicting." Again:

> The poet makes unconsciously a selection which outwits the force of habit; the impulses he awakens are freed, through the very means by which they are aroused, from the inhibitions that ordinary circumstances encourage; the irrelevant and extraneous are excluded; and upon the resulting simplified but widened field of impulses he imposes an order. . . .

With this definition of value we reach the turning-point of the discussion: we confront implications which are rather excitingly realistic: and it is the most serious failure of Mr. Richards's book that it is exactly this point which he does not squarely meet. There being no universal of value (in an objective sense), then it follows that a poem in which X finds value (i. e., a better organization of impulses than he can manage by himself) must be good: it arouses in X the feeling we loosely call beauty. To escape the staggering solecism which must ensue here (and it is interesting to note that Mr. Richards wants to escape), he appears to assume (1) that Y is a better judge than X if his mind is a finer (less wasteful) systematization of impulses; and (2) that as between two works of art that one is the better which is the more complex—is the resultant of an organization of a greater number of impulses. This is suspiciously like stating that a good critic is one who likes a good poem, and that a good poem is one which is liked by a good critic. It is an argument in a circle, and inevitably involves the surreptitious reëntrance of the "absolute" value which we had been at such pains to exclude. Mr. Richards even goes so far in this direction as to readmit "taste," which apparently he identifies with sensibility (p. 62).

The reversal is tantamount to giving up the position as soon as won. Mr. Richards retreats from the purely social-psychological view of art because he dislikes the implication (which it leads to) that value in art must always be simply an equation between artist and audience. We have no right to assume—as he so devotedly wants to assume—that one level of art is "better" than another, or that Y in liking it is necessarily possessed of a more "finely" organized mind. All we can say is that there are many levels in art, each suited to its audience (for which it is art, producing the desired effect); and then classify these, studying their history and laws, in terms of the simple-to-complex. Again, had Mr. Richards gone a little farther

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with Freud than he does, and posited a genesis for art partly or largely psychotic, he could not so lightly assume that the artist is one whose mind is "better organized," or whatever, than the average. A safer ground here, perhaps, is the assumption that the artist is one whose mind is less efficiently organized for a life of "action" than the average, and that his art is the process, analogous to the daydream, by which he seeks to maintain his balance. To those whose psychosis corresponds closely to his own, his work will be "good"—it becomes their successful daydream.

A purely functional view of this sort would, I think, prove to be the soundest basis for criticism. It would find as interesting and valuable a place for Ella Wheeler Wilcox as for Henry James—at the same time noting their remarkable differences. It would correlate changes in art with changes in social temper and social organization. It might well predict the gradual decline of art, or, at any rate, of certain kinds, as society becomes less capriciously organized and individual aspirations are allowed greater freedom. At the present moment, for example, it would note, and attempt to analyze, the decline of "tragic" art and the corresponding increase in importance of the merely "amusing." In this fact it might see a decrease in the more profoundly psychotic elements in art—an interesting tendency which may or may not have far-reaching significance.

CONRAD AIKEN.

Olive Schreiner

The Letters of Olive Schreiner, edited by Cronwright Schreiner. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $5.

OLIVE SCHREINER was neither a born letter-writer nor did she choose to make herself become one. She wrote carelessly, egotistically, of her health, of her sufferings, of her beliefs and desires, as if she were talking in the privacy of her room to a friend whom she trusted. This carelessness, while it has its charm, imposes some strain on the reader. If he is not to drop the book, dispirited by the jumble and muddle of odds and ends, plans and arrangements, bulletins of health and complaints of landladies—all of which are related as if Olive Schreiner were a figure of the highest importance—he must seek some point of view which imposes unity, some revelation in the light of which this rather distant and unfamiliar figure becomes of interest. He will find it perhaps in two sentences written in the same letter the year before she died. "Nothing matters in life but love and a great pity for all our fellows," she writes. That, indeed, was her teaching. A few lines lower down she adds, "It's ten days ago since I've spoken to anyone except the girl who brings up my coals and water." That was her fate. The discrepancy between what she desired and what she achieved can be felt, jarring and confusing, throughout the book. Always she is striving for something which escapes her grasp. Always some fault or misfortune interferes with her success. She loves the world at large, but cannot endure any individual in particular. Such would seem to be an outline snapshot of her position. But it is difficult to say further where the fault or the misfortune lay. Early in life she won fame and popularity enough to gratify the most ambitious with her first book, The Story of an African Farm. She came to England, and was at once the centre of an appreciative group of distinguished men. Her husband, as he told us last year in his biography, sacrificed a livelihood so that she might pursue her work under the most favorable conditions. She herself had a profound belief in her genius, and an overwhelming enthusiasm for her convictions. Nevertheless, all the strife and agony which ring through her letters—"The hidden agony of my life no human being understands"; "I am a fine genius, a celebrity, and tomorrow all these people would tread me under their feet"—resulted in one remarkable novel and a few other fragmentary works which no admirer of The Story of an African Farm would care to place beside it. But that famous book itself provides some explanation of her failure to become, as she bade fair to become, the equal of our greatest novelists. In its brilliance and power it reminds us inevitably of the Brontë novels. In it, as in them, we feel ourselves in the presence of a powerful nature which can make us see what it saw, and feel what it felt with astounding vividness. But it has the limitations of those egotistical masterpieces without a full measure of their strength. The writer's interests are local, her passions personal, and we cannot help suspecting that she has neither the width nor the strength to enter with sympathy into the experiences of minds differing from her own, or to debate questions calmly and reasonably.

Unfortunately for her fame as a writer, it was into debate and politics, and not into thought and literature, that she was impelled, chiefly by her passionate interest in sex questions. She was driven to teach, to dream and prophesy. Questions affecting women, in particular the relations between the sexes, obsessed her. There is scarcely a letter in the present volume in which she does not discuss them with passion, insight, and force, but interminably, in season and out, while her gifts as a writer were bestowed upon a stupendous work upon woman, which, though it took up her time and thought for years, remained, unfortunately, an unfinished masterpiece.

Her private life, disclosed very openly in the present book, seems equally thwarted and disappointed. Driven by asthma to travel perpetually, unrest, dissatisfaction, and, in the end, a profound loneliness, seem to take possession of her. "I am only a broken and untried possibility," she wrote. And again, " . . . the only feeling I have about my life is that I have thrown it all away, done nothing with it." Ironically enough, when she first came to London, her landlady turned her out because she had too many gentlemen visitors; in her last years she was expelled because she had a German name. It is impossible not to feel for her something of the pity and respect which all martyrs inspire in us, and not least those martyrs who are not required to sacrifice their lives to a cause, but sacrifice, perhaps more disastrously, humor and sweetness and sense of proportion. But there were compensations; the cause itself—the emancipation of women—was of the highest importance, and it would be frivolous to dismiss her as a mere crank, a piece of wreckage used and then thrown aside as the cause triumphed onwards. She remains even now, when the vigor of her books is spent, and her personal sway, evidently of the most powerful, is a memory limited to those who knew her, too uncompromising a figure to be so disposed of. Her obsessions and her egotism are perfectly obvious in her letters; but so, too, are her convictions, her ruthless sincerity, and the masterly sanity which so often contrasts on the same page with childish outbursts of unreason. Olive Schreiner was one half of a great writer; a diamond marred by a flaw.

VIRGINIA WOOLF.

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The Modern Mephistopheles

The Secret of the Coup d'Etat, edited with an Introduction by the Earl of Kerry, and a study by Philip Guedalla. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. $3.50.

IN these days of post-war disillusionment, of class struggle, of misery and of want, the keen observer may note a growing interest in the "happy" days of the past, and may remark that gradually the period of the mid-nineteenth century is being relegated to that past. We read of the Victorian age, and of the Second Empire, as we read of the splendor and corruption of the Ancien Régime, and in the mind of the average person the glamor of romance is rapidly blotting out the more mundane features. And we are, indeed, far, far removed from the thrilling events of the fifties—the most incredibly startling of which was the famous Coup d'Etat of December 2, 1851, by which Louis Napoléon, President of the Second French Republic, overthrew the constitution and made himself the undisputed master of the situation. It is like a page torn from the story of palace intrigue in the days of Byzantium's glory, or from the narrative of Renaissance conspiracy and crime. Interest in it will remain, as long as humanity enjoys a good plot.

It can hardly be said that the present volume lives entirely up to its title, in spite of the reassuring statements of Mr. Guedalla in the introduction. There are a number of obscure points in the story of the happenings of December 2 as we know it, but none of these are definitely disposed of by this correspondence, which consists largely of the letters of the Comte de Flahault, illegitimate son of Talleyrand, lover of Louis Napoléon's mother, aide-de-camp to the great Napoléon, friend of the Orléans family, and generally an adventurer and an opportunist. Flahault was not in the inner circle of the Elysée, nor was he one of the prime movers in engineering the plot. In fact, he had come to Paris from his London home, expressly to attempt a reconciliation between the President and the Assembly. It was hardly more than an accident that he was drawn into the conspiracy at the end.

But the book has a real value—the real value attaching to any private correspondence. Flahault was no fool, and his letters show that he clearly understood the needs of the country and that he had a deep love for it. After perusing the volume, one realizes that even the trivial passages, and they are many, serve to give one a deeper insight and a juster understanding of the situation and of the actors in the drama. One appreciates that Napoléon, however selfish his motives may have been, could advance some arguments in extenuation. The country was just emerging from a revolution—both political and social—which had settled nothing. Below the surface the struggle was going on unabated, one party conspiring and intriguing against another or all the others. It appears from these letters that not only the Orléanists, but the Legitimists and the Chamber itself were plotting against the constitution, while in the background, gaunt and terrifying, stood the spectre of the social revolution, the red cohorts of Louis Blanc, threatening to shatter "society" from the very foundations. After all, Louis Napoléon merely anticipated his enemies, and if France accepted him without much murmuring, it was in the belief that he had saved those that had from the machinations of those who had not.

And still, Napoléon was the Mephisto his generation thought him to be. In how far he was personally responsible is still a mystery. But from Flahault's letters we see him as the dark shadow in the background, enigmatic, distrustful and ungrateful, surrounded from the beginning by a group of very questionable characters who undoubtedly helped to bring out the worst that was in him. They all live again in these pages—Persigny, who even then talked of the necessity of annexing the Rhine Provinces "in order that the powers might see that they had a master before whom they must quail," who talked loosely of having done with all the royal families and all the old parties, of regenerating society, and of making the Tuileries the place from which the world was to be set trembling; Morny, the natural brother of Napoléon and the son of Flahault, who, gambler though he was, seems to have had a certain clearness of vision and the energy to see the thing through. And there is a host of others, St. Arnaud, Rouher, Maupas, Fould, one worse than the other, each outdoing the others in unscrupulousness and greed. It was a disreputable clique indeed, and if a man may be judged by the friends he cultivates, Napoléon stands condemned to begin with.

WILLIAM L. LANGER.

Tonic Laughter

We, by Eugene Zamiatin; authorized translation from the Russian by Gregory Zilboorg. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $3.

THE natural reaction of the intellectual to the restrictions of wartime is a chafing disgust, a rebellious laughter. In Russia, where the enemies of the revolutionary régime have involuntarily evoked the iron discipline of war, satire is as welcome as spice in a barrel of gunpowder. And so Zamiatin's eloquent travesty on the Communist Utopia has had to look abroad for publication. Almost all the details of the book, from the election day whose results are as inevitable as sunrise, to the "unifs," or regulation costume worn by the citizens of the World-State, have reference to the peculiar regimentation which governs Soviet life. At the same time, the author ridicules the mechanized society whose precise standardization, fairly realized in these states, is still only a devout dream of ambitious Communists.

The book is written in the form of a diary, kept by a citizen of the perfected World-State a thousand years hence, during the terrific days when this supreme social order is threatened by revolution. The rebels are executed by the "Machine of the Well-Doer," which reduces each of them to a little pool of chemically pure water, and any further outbreak is prevented by subjecting all the citizens to an operation which deprives them of imagination, and thereby secures the eternal safety of their rational and mechanical civilization. The novel is saved from the dullness of a tract by the skill with which the author has introduced the elements of "heart-interest" and suspense, and by the peculiar, rapid, disjointed quality of the style. It is a pity that the translation is somewhat stilted and inexact, for Zamiatin's method is an original one.

The man himself suggests the Anglo-Saxon rather than the Russian. He is tall, straight, blond, and clean-shaven except for a little moustache; his blue eyes are lit with fragmentary smiles, like the jerk of an electric bulb in a flashed advertisement; and his crisp manner is less that of the littérateur than of the naval engineer.

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He has brought his mathematical bent into his writing; his images are frequently drawn from calculus; and his contributions to a recent symposium on modern Russian art expressed the conviction that it is the business of the author to import technology and to work with the synthetic image of the elliptic Syntax, to clip the phrase and speed up the action, if it is to reflect the life of our time.

The novel under review, while less moving and less amusing than certain of his short stories, is valuable as a document for social historians. The order that Zamiatin asks us to laugh at is, I think, less likely to eventuate in Russia than in countries further west, geographically and spiritually. But it is sufficiently in the minds and desires of men to afford material for both satirist and student.

BABETTE DEUTSCH.

A Discourse upon Usury

A Discourse upon Usury, by Thomas Wilson. Edited with an historical introduction, by R. H. Tawney. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.50.

MR. TAWNEY has made out of Dr. Wilson's half-forgotten treatise a book that is indispensable no less to students of politics than to economic historians. His introduction is not only a learned essay upon the early history of credit transactions, but a most illuminating account of the struggle between capitalist necessity and Christian ethics at the time when the former was beginning to triumph over the fading ideal of the middle ages. In 1500, as he says, usury was regarded as "ignominious, immoral, or positively illegal"; in 1600, "money-lending was on the way to enjoy the legal security of a recognized and reputable profession." Mr. Tawney traces the stages by which industry freed itself from the trammels of theological ethics, how the life economic separated itself from the life spiritual. The root point of the change is the interpretation given to Calvin's views by followers who were tasting the rich fruits of the new capitalism. It is a fascinating story, and Mr. Tawney tells it with that insight into the filiation of ideas and that dignity of style we have learned to expect from him. No one, indeed, since T. H. Green, has, among English thinkers, had the same power to state the grounds for making the social system a moral adventure as Mr. Tawney; and here he is at his best.

Mr. Tawney, of course, raises by implication the general question of how far the principles of Christianity provide a rule of economic life. It is not an easy question to answer. There are sentences in the Gospels which would seem to make a fairly vigorous Communism the only possible way of living. There are others which seem to imply that the possession of wealth is forgivable if it is used with a high sense of moral obligation. What alone can be said to emerge finally from the New Testament, is the sense that material wealth stands solidly in the way of spiritual well-being and that, accordingly, it is a hindrance to salvation. But no one can understand the politics of Christianity unless he remembers that the early Church was a handful of spiritual revolutionaries in the midst of a pagan world. To survive, it was necessary to prove that they did not by their tenets preach political disloyalty and economic disorder. That was the task, notably, of St. Paul and the early Fathers. What, broadly, they taught was the doctrine of stewardship, the argument that wealth may be justified by the purposes to which it is devoted. When, after the fall of the Western Empire, the Church itself had become one of the greatest property-owners in the world, the doctrine was a comfortable one. It meant that men could purchase their salvation at the expense of some portion of their prosperity. Charity was so organized that, in the background of the feudal system, it is not unfair to say that the obligation to maintain the poor was everywhere recognized in the middle ages.

The Reformation introduced new considerations. In the first place, the scale of industrial enterprise began to alter; something akin to the modern proletariat emerges into the light of day. In the second, the new religious doctrines promoted a new ethic, and it was a widespread tenet in that ethic that the light of God's favor shines upon those in a state of Grace; whence it was not a large step to infer that poverty was a mark of sin. Mr. Tawney shows admirably how exactly this view suited the commercial necessities of the time. Add to it the growing emancipation of the state from the Church, the dislike, in England, of nonconformity for a state-action which it chiefly knew as persecution, and the ground was amply prepared for individualist enterprise and laissez-faire. Meanwhile, of course, the development of toleration and scientific inquiry had both emphasized the difficulty of permeating political action with religious assumptions, and marked a doubt as to the validity of those assumptions themselves. By the end of the French Revolution it is fairly true to say that Christianity had become, for most, a matter of faith rather than of works, made true by its influence on the inner mind and not upon outer conduct. A good Christian meant a good official Christian. You can search the works of Cardinal Newman without finding any sense that the tenets of his creed had any relation to the problem of poverty. It was English nonconformity which mainly did battle against the Factory Acts. The moral fervor of Mr. Rockefeller's Baptist convictions has not seemed to him incompatible with the history of the Standard Oil Company. It is on religious grounds that Cardinal O'Connell objects to the federal abolition of child labor. The wheel has come full circle with a vengeance.

Mr. Tawney is himself a notable figure in a movement which regards this evolution as something akin to a tragedy. He and those who think with him believe that a religious faith is worthless unless it issues in deliberate social consequences. They are therefore, in a broad sense, Socialists, by which they mean that the resources of society must be deliberately organized so as to mitigate the consequences of economic inequality. That is, for many, a vivid and commanding faith. Is it likely to have influence? There will be the most varied answers to that question. There can be, I think, but little question that the religious impulse is, with many, the chief basis of their belief in the British Labor Movement. That is less true in Germany and France. But there are even signs in the American churches that a religious creed must take up an attitude upon the economic problems of the time. It is not an easy attitude to take. The foundations of our economic order rest most largely upon its denial. It will take an effort as vigorous and as compelling as that which brought the British Labor Movement to its present position if it is to succeed. Men there, as in the early Church, were prepared to lose the whole world if they could gain their soul. The adventure lies open. It will be a matter of intense interest to see who will embark upon it.

H. J. LASKI.

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Wagner, the Paradox

Wagner as Man and Artist, by Ernest Newman. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $5.

"WHAT hath the Publik to do with it?" asked Mathilde Wesendonck of Ashton Ellis as this gentleman published her correspondence with Wagner for the benefit of an interested world.

And Ernest Newman, presenting the second edition of his latest Wagnerian study to America, where he has come from England to act as music critic on the New York Evening Post, answers: "Both Wagner and the Wagner family have gone to unheard of lengths to make us sharers of that privacy." "Wagner was anxious to paint his own portrait for posterity: it is for us to try to find out to what extent the portrait is true or false."

Tracing in the image a composite of Rogue's Gallery lineaments, a petulant, unreliable, dishonest figure of a man, Mr. Newman nimbly divides his sittings into life and works, reserves his sympathies for the second half of the book, and calls the dyptich: Wagner as Man and Artist.

That the resulting personality is fused at all is due to the one common denominator that Mr. Newman allows his subject; the sheer size and dominance of his traits. If Wagner is picayune in controversy, as with Hanslick and Nietzsche, he is picayune on a vast scale, summoning pages of rationalizations to support his prejudice.

If Wagner is parasitic in money matters, as with Baron Hornstein, it is in the grand manner. He asks not for thousands but for tens of thousands, he puts the loan as a test of the creditor's character, even of his artistic discrimination and social propriety. If the money is not available, it is because Wagner is a titan, ahead of his times and misunderstood by the men of his day. The refusal to pay has been turned by these wily fingers into one more stone in the monument of a great man.

If Wagner is sly in an affair of the heart, as with Mme. Laussot, he is sly with infinite pains. He writes endless letters to his wife, to show her up as a suspicious and heartless shrew, he indites volumes to another confidante full of "salvation," "unspeakable love-charm," "deep-bleeding heart," and "bourgeois hypocrisy," he sends reproaches of eloquent patronage to his lady-love. The fact remains in brief English that he was scared off from running away with a married woman, but the fact has been veiled with so many thousand words, that Wagner must have appeared to himself as he wished his followers to believe him: a tragic Lohengrin, vainly offering release to a maiden whose very unworthiness made the redemption impossible.

To account for Tristan and Meistersinger and the rest in terms of such an egocentric showman, Mr. Newman has recourse to the theory of dualism. "He keeps his dual psychological life going with perfect honesty and absolute unconsciousness."

In the first half of the book everything is strutting, dissimulation, conceit to the point of mania. In the second we are told again and again of concentration, inexhaustible mental wealth, grandeur, exquisite adaptibility moulding a deep consistence of purpose. Women have been taken up and thrown aside with reckless abandon by the man, but the "very color and temperature" of the Ring seeped deep into Wagner's spirit for twelve years of alien work, and then flashed back through a pen that had lost nothing of its cunning as artist.

It is thus obvious that Mr. Newman has kept his hands off the paradox that was Wagner. He is as enthusiastic for the artist as he is merciless toward the man. It is rather for the reader to edit the life; to find in the Tristan and Kurvenal the relationship that Wagner expected from his friends; to trace the necessity for a philosophy of renunciation like that of Parsifal in the satiety that arose from too many festooned satin roses in the ceiling, too many soft perfumes and embroidered waistcoats in the Briennerstrasse; to seek in the music itself the perfect picture of heroic moods that can come only from a man who is to himself a hero.

Such is the function of Mr. Newman's readers, and it is safe to assume that they will rise with animation to the task. But are they equipped to build their explanations on a psychological basis? Can they diagnose the endless reversals and contrasts of the life with any degree of accuracy? One begins to demand another Wagnerian book: Wagner, If Man, Why Artist? to solve the problem that Mr. Newman has exposed with his brilliant neutrality.

MARY ELLIS OPDYCKE.

God's Stepchildren

God's Stepchildren, by Sarah G. Millin. New York: Boni and Liveright. $2.

THE important fact about this book is that it is a good novel. The cover tactlessly calls it "a story with a purpose that burns like a beacon," which is enough to frighten off all the people who would most enjoy it, but despite the fact that blood plays the leading rôle—white blood and black blood capriciously mixed in the veins of five generations of South Africans—the novel suffers no violence by propaganda. It is not, in fact, a novel with a purpose. It is a novel with a theme. The mixture of races is exploited, not exposed, by Miss Millin. If she takes advantage of what is, except India, the most tangled jungle of social distinctions, color barriers, taboos, and race hatreds in the world, and makes a strong absorbing book out of it, it is because she uses artistic and not advertising sense. She smothers moral indignation with the ironic humor, the compassion and the gentle lucidity of a balanced mind.

The book begins with the arrival (in 1824) of the Rev. Andrew Flood among the Hottentots, and his unfruitful labors for the redemption of their souls. In desperation he conceives the idea of marrying into his flock so that the Hottentots may feel he is a brother, and be a little less derisive of his religion. But the Hottentots only despise him more, and a chocolate colored daughter Deborah is born to him to begin the confusion of a mixed race. As she herself was fathered by a fanatic white man, Deborah's son, Hans, is idly begotten by another, and the Rev. Andrew's blood begins a slow process of bleaching.

> He [Hans] despised a man in proportion as he was brown. Just physical lightness or darkness was the only test. . . . And indeed, it was, in general, the chief test in Kokstad—how a man arrived at lightness of skin did not matter. What mattered was simply his pigmentation, and he was respected just in so far as his white blood expressed itself visibly. If . . . there were several members in a family of different shades of brown, they were socially graded according to whether they were lighter or darker.

With each generation, by accident or by design, the white

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Climbing the Walls

Can we scale the walls of the past, those walls which heredity and environment have erected about us?

Deterministic philosophy of the day says so.

Edward G. Spaulding sees the truth in the deterministic attitude but disagrees with it on some points.

In the April number of Scribner's Magazine, Dr. Spaulding outlines the trend of philosophic thought from the Greeks down to the present.

He states the present problem and clearly states his answer to it.

* * *

"Walls of the Past" is written by a man of keen and tolerant mind, with a touch that is not heavy or pedantic.

* * *

In the May number of Scribner's Magazine he continues with "Why Men Disagree."

* * *

Edward M. East, distinguished biologist, will follow with discussions of heredity, the first two of which will be "Heredity—the Master Riddle of Science" and "Heredity and Sex."

* * *

George Ellery Hale in the April number of Scribner's Magazine presents "The Oriental Ancestry of the Telescope."

* * *

Edith Wharton discusses the technique and purpose of the short story.

H. A. L. Fisher gives his impressions of the changes which have come over America during the fifteen years which elapsed between his recent visit and the one previous.

* * *

J. Frank Davis presents "Uncle Tom's Cabin"—an American institution.

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Roger Burlingame contributes a story "Bachelors on Horseback"; Isa Urquhart Glenn, "Tropical Heat and White Men"; Edwin Cole Dickenson, "Jonesy Gets His Swim."

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strain in the Rev. Andrew's descendants becomes more dominant, and the humiliations of the ebbing strain more difficult to bear, until the last high crisis is reached when Barry Lindsell, whose blood is almost pure, brings home his new young bride from England. Miss Millin creates these characters with imagination and restraint, and keeps her narrative moving down its century-long course with gathering momentum.

God's Stepchildren is not a book like the Passage to India, subtle, chameleon-like, brilliantly superficial to the point of being profound. It is simply conceived, simply and relentlessly written. But the impossibility it deals with is much like that of Forster's masterpiece, and it leads up to an ever more tragic inconclusiveness, a dramatic cul-de-sac from which even the backward path is blocked.

E. V.

The New Vision in the German Arts, by Herman George Scheffauer. New York: B. W. Huebsch. $2.

AN exhibition of Expressionism in all its forms—in the absolute poems of Blümner, the architecture of Eric Mendelsohn, the plays of Kaiser and Toller, and the movies of Walter Ruttmann. Mr. Scheffauer writes with sympathy and enthusiasm: he has, moreover, the binocular vision of one who knows both Germany and America well. If it had a few of the chillier virtues, to round out the judgments and balance the enthusiasms, this book might serve as a survey of German culture after the War. As it is, it is a witness to the astonishing vitality of German art and letters—able to transmute the products of decomposition, and turn them to the uses of art.

L. M.

The Index for Volume XLI which was completed with our issue No. 533, has been printed separately. It will be mailed on request, post free, to any subscriber who will send his name and address on a card directed to The New Republic, 421 West 21st Street, New York City.

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